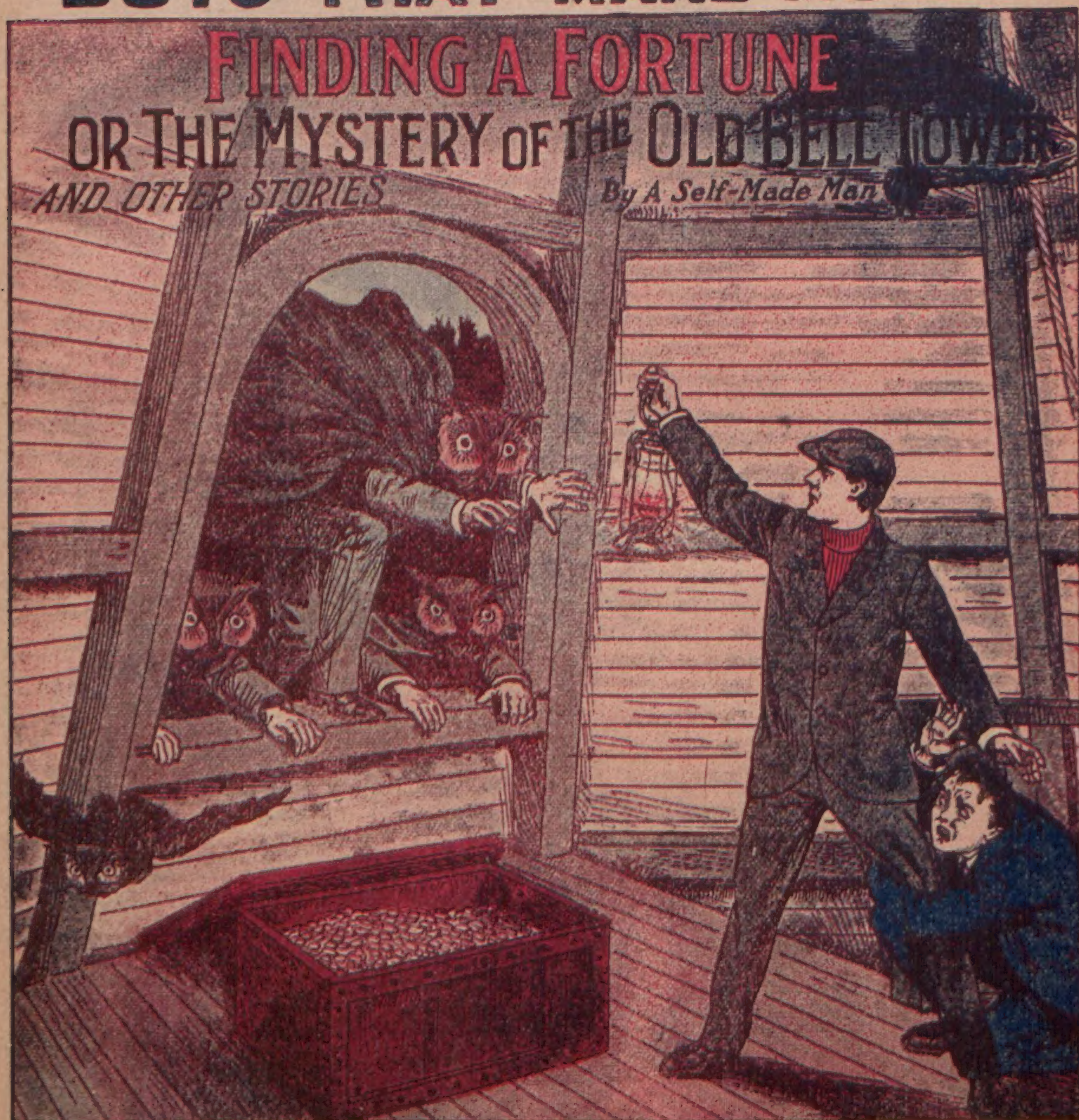


FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.



At that moment a sudden noise came from the opening. Fred flashed the lantern in that direction. "Oh my!" gasped Sam, sinking down in fright when he saw what appeared to be three gigantic owls about to spring on them.

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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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FINDING A FORTUNE

OR, THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD BELL TOWER

BY A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Old Bell Tower.

"I tell you, Fred, I'm just as certain that old bell tower yonder is haunted, as I am to-day is Tuesday," said Sam Fields, shaking his head in a positive way.

"Get out, you're dreaming!" laughed Fred Osgood, thrusting his hands deeper in his pockets, for the night wind that swept across fields on the outskirts of the village of Singleton was cold and searching.

"No, I'm not dreaming. Lots of people around here think just as I do."

"That's because they're superstitious. Don't you know, Sam, there's no such things as ghosts?"

"No, I don't. Haven't I read and heard lots of ghost stories?"

"I've no doubt you have. And you've read and heard a lot of fish stories, too. There's as much truth in the one as in the other."

"How do you know? The fact that you've never seen a ghost is no evidence they don't exist."

"Have you ever seen one yourself?"

"No, and I hope I won't. I'd have a fit if I saw one. They're awful creepy-looking things, dressed in white, with a horrible, deathly-looking face and great staring eyes, like those of a dead fish. Ugh! I don't like to think about them."

"What did you bring up the subject for, then?"

"Because that old bell tower is right before us, and we've got to pass close to it."

"This isn't the first time you've passed it."

"I know it, but I don't like to do it at night."

"You don't like to pass the churchyard, either?"

"No, I don't. I wouldn't go through it at night for a thousand dollars."

"I wish somebody would offer me ten dollars to do that, you'd see how quick I'd take him up."

"You've got more nerve than I have."

"I've got more common sense than you have. Ghosts are merely a prank of the imagination."

"I don't believe it. When one dies he becomes a ghost."

"How do you know that? How does any one know it?"

"It stands to reason."

"I don't see it. When you die, your soul leaves the body and goes to heaven, or the other place. That's what religion teaches us, doesn't it?"

"Sure; and what's your soul but your ghost?"

"Well, admitting that it is, for the sake of argument, it departs from the earth, and doesn't hang around bell towers and churchyards to

amuse itself frightening nervous people who will eventually become that kind of ghost themselves some day."

"That's what you say, but lots of people have seen ghosts. Their word ought to be worth something."

"They only imagined they saw them. An old dead tree, bleached white by the storms of years, with its limbs waving in the night wind, has often been converted into a ghost by superstitious people; or a white cow, left out overnight, standing with its head over a fence, or a tombstone with the moonlight at a certain angle. I could mention a hundred things that would produce the same effect on those susceptible to such things. I tell you, Sam——"

At that moment a heavy gust of wind swept across the landscape and momentarily checked the rapid walk of the two boys. At the same instant the bell, which still hung in the old tower, as it had ever since it was originally placed in position, over one hundred years before, gave three slow, solemn peals. The effect was decidedly startling on Sam, for they were close to the old ruin by that time, and the strokes sounded particularly weird under the circumstances.

The tower surmounted one corner of a dilapidated edifice which had once been a church, antedating by a few years the Revolutionary War. It was partly built of gray stone, partly of wood, which explained why it had so long survived the storms of more than a century. In summer it was almost completely hidden by a thick growth of English ivy, which made it a most picturesque ruin, but in cold weather it stood out bleak and gaunt, like a grizzled old veteran on his last legs.

"Oh, my!" gurgled Sam, as the three strokes of the bell, struck apparently by no human hands, smote upon the chill night air.

Fred looked up at the dark tower mechanically. He was not frightened in the least. His quick brain found an explanation for the three notes of the bell in the gust of wind. The old bell tower was open front and back, and he reasoned that the wind, having free access through it, might easily have set the old bell, heavy as it was, in motion.

"There, I told you it was haunted!" shivered Sam.

"Nonsense! The wind did that."

"The wind! It rang just three times."

"What of it? It might have rung once, or twice, or four times."

"It always rings three times," said Sam solemnly.

"Always!" said Fred.

"Yes, always. And it rings that way when there isn't any wind to move it."

"Have you ever heard it ring before when there was no wind?"

"I've heard it of calm nights when I lay in bed. You can hear it for a mile around. Everybody hears it ring at different times, always at night, just that way—three times; no more and no less. That's one of the reasons why the old bell tower is considered surely haunted. The bell couldn't ring unless it was made to swing to and fro. There isn't a person in this neighborhood who would dare go up there after dark and ring that bell even for fun. It's the ghost of the old sexton, dead these one hundred years, who does it. Everybody here believes that. Come, let's get on."

"Has anybody ever seen the ghost of the old sexton?" asked Fred, as they started on.

"Steve Willett says he has. And Ben Wright declares he has seen him, too."

"Steve is the tavern keeper's son, I believe?" said Fred, who had not been long enough in that neighborhood to get acquainted with many persons yet.

"Yes."

"Do you consider his word reliable?"

"I don't know as I do," replied Sam, in a doubtful tone, for he had no very high opinion of Steve, who was a rather shiftless boy by nature, though his father managed to make him useful around his place. "However, I believe Ben Wright. He wouldn't say he saw a ghost if he didn't."

"Where did Ben Wright see this alleged spook, and how could he tell that it was the sexton's ghost?"

"He was coming along this road alone one night when, just as he was passing the old church, as we are now, he saw the ghost standing at the door dressed all in white, as if he had stepped out of his—oh, my! look! look!"

Sam almost fell against Fred, as he stared, goggle-eyed, at the open door and pointed with one extended arm.

"What's the matter?" asked Fred, his eyes following the direction of his companion's arm.

His gaze rested on the open doorway, but he saw nothing there to arouse his curiosity.

"Did you see it?" faltered Sam, shivering perceptibly.

"See what?"

"The ghost."

"No, I didn't. Where is it?"

"It's gone. Disappeared as I spoke. It was standing at the door looking at us."

Fred laughed incredulously.

"You've got them," he said.

"Got what?"

"The horrors. You see things that don't exist."

"I tell you I did see it—as plainly as I see you."

"Let's go over and investigate?"

"Not on your life!" cried Sam. "Come on, let's get away from here."

"Wait here, then. I'm going over."

Sam tried to prevent him, but Fred was determined to satisfy himself that his companion was laboring under a hallucination. He walked up to

the doorway and looked inside. It was so dark that he could see nothing. Then he stepped inside and struck a match. He found himself in the vestibule of the church, which was directly under the old bell tower. The wooden floor was still fairly intact, but covered with dirt. In one corner stood a narrow flight of stairs, winding upward. A dilapidated door connected with the interior of the church itself. Fred went over and pushed against it. It swung grudgingly open, with a complaining creak, on its rusty hinges. All beyond was dark and silent, save for the sounds made by the wind at a score of crevices.

Through a hole in the roof the boy caught a sight of the sky. The door swung back with another loud creak when Fred released it. As he stood in the darkness of the vestibule another heavy gust swooped down on the ruin, and again the bell tolled its solemn notes—three times again. Fred heard it more distinctly than before, as the sound came down through the space above his head. Looking across the road, he saw Sam hugging the fence. Then an idea struck him. He would ascend to the old bell tower and call to his companion from there. He hoped that would help convince him that the ghost theory was ridiculous. Accordingly, he dashed up the steps, flashing matches as he went, to make sure that none of the stairs was missing. He first reached a small, square room above the vestibule, which was where the original sexton, as well as his successors, rang the call to services from. There was a hole in the ceiling through which the bell rope descended, but the rope was no longer in evidence.

It had either been cut away above by some vandal, or had rotted off of its own accord. There were two small windows in the room, looking up and down the road. Some of the diamond-shaped colored glass remained in the lattice-like sashes. A ladder led up to a trap opening in the ceiling, the other side of which was the floor of the tower. Up that Fred hustled in the dark and struck a match. He flashed it around the tower before he completed his ascent. The tower itself was built of wood and had six sides. The place was bare of everything except the bell, which hung in the center of the room, its ponderous clapper hanging straight down.

The wind made a clean sweep through it. To fully satisfy himself that it was the action of this wind which moved the bell, causing the pendant clapper to strike against its side, Fred reached up and gave it a push. To his surprise, it didn't budge an inch. He had to confess that the phenomenon was something of a mystery, but he was by no means converted to Sam's impression, which appeared to be that of other inhabitants of the locality, that the bell was rung by the ghost of the sexton. Leaving the question undecided, he walked to the window overlooking the road and looked down. The dark object against the fence opposite was Sam, of course, who was impatiently awaiting his return.

"Hi, Sam! Sam!" he shouted, waving his arms.

Sam heard his voice and looked up. He was fairly amazed at Fred's nerve in venturing up alone into the haunted old bell tower. He could not find his voice to answer his companion's hail, but stared up at his indistinct head and arms, with mouth half open.

"Gosh!" he muttered. "He's got pluck enough to do——"

He was about to add anything, when suddenly the mysterious bell tower was suddenly lighted up by a bright red glare which threw what was visible of Fred out in bold relief. The glow lasted but a few seconds, and then the old bell tower became as dark as ever. Fred, however, was no longer at the window.

CHAPTER II.—Fred's Curious Experience.

Fred was looking down at Sam when the old bell tower became illuminated. He sprang around in surprise, but before he could make out whence the bright glow proceeded it went out. For some moments he stood half-blinded, thoroughly mystified by the remarkable occurrence.

"I'm bound to say that light gets my goat," he thought. "If Sam was up here with me it would have scared several days' growth out of him. He must have seen it from the road. Perhaps he thinks that the old sexton's ghost has done me up. I'll have to come here in the daytime at the first chance and investigate this place thoroughly. I more than suspect, now, that somebody is hiding up here, but just where it is impossible to discover in the darkness. If the practical joker thought to frighten me, he's missed his aim. I might as well go down, for I see no good of staying here any longer."

He went to the trap and began to descend. His head was nearly level with the floor when the bell gave forth a reverberating note. Fred stopped and looked at it. The clapper was hanging motionless, but he saw it move toward the side of the bell facing the alcove and strike again. It returned to the center. As it moved forward the third time Fred hastily scrambled back into the tower. The third stroke sounded and the clapper was at rest again before the boy could reach it. He felt around both outside and inside of the bell for a string or a wire, but only found a short piece of rotten rope.

He was puzzled and disappointed, for he thought he had solved the cause of the ringing. That it was not the wind was clear, because the clapper had moved across the wind current, and not with it.

"Some human agency is at the bottom of it, that's certain. This ghost business is all rot. Some village chap has been working this supernatural trick right along, and laughing in his sleeve over the mystery he has created. I wonder who the wag is? When I'm better acquainted around here I'll bet I'll get on to him," thought Fred, as he started once more to go down.

This time he was not stopped by any mysterious manifestations, and he reached the vestibule all right and walked out into the road. Sam had changed his position to one farther on, and when Fred made his appearance he hurried to meet him.

"My! What a nerve you have to go up there! You saw the light, didn't you? Did you see the ghost of the old sexton? Don't you believe the old bell tower is haunted now?"

"One question at a time, Sam," replied Fred, as they started on their way again. "I saw the light, of course, but it went out before I could

make out what caused it. I didn't see the ghost of the old sexton, but I did see one thing which I can't account for, but hope to one of these days."

"What was that?" asked Sam eagerly.

"You heard the last three taps of the bell?"

"Sure I heard them."

"I was just going down the ladder when the first one sounded. The bell itself didn't move."

"Didn't it?" said Sam wonderingly.

"No. It's as solid as a rock and couldn't. I tested it when I first went up there. The clapper is easily worked, and that moved over to the side of the bell and struck it. I saw it do it."

The boys continued to talk on the subject for the rest of their way to the farmhouse they were bound for. Fred Osgood was a comparatively recent addition to the population of Singleton, where he had come to fill a position in the office of the novelty factory, having been selected from a number of applicants who had answered the company's advertisement inserted in a city paper. He had been raised in the city, going through the high school after finishing his grammar course, and the country was new to him. His father and mother were in moderate circumstances, so that they had been obliged to make many sacrifices in order to give him a good education. As soon as he finished his schooling it was up to him to hustle for a position in order to begin his career in the world. The situation open with the Singleton Novelty Company appeared to be a good one, but his parents did not like the idea of his going away from home. As really good office jobs seemed hard to pick up without influence in the city, they finally yielded a reluctant consent to the separation, and so Fred packed his trunk and came to the old village of Singleton, and got a room and board with Sam Field's mother, who was a widow. Sam worked in the factory, in the mechanical department, and was a lively, good-natured boy. He liked Fred the moment he saw him, and the two struck up a warm friendship.

Sam had already introduced Fred to many of his friends, and now the two were on their way to attend a party at a farmhouse to which Sam had been invited. This farmhouse was two miles outside the village, and the boys did not consider that a big walk, even though the night was windy and chilly. They received a hearty welcome, for Sam was a great favorite wherever he went, and any friend he brought with him got the glad hand as well.

Fred, being a stranger, had to be introduced all around. The girls were a little shy of him at first, but they all agreed that he was a very good-looking and well-behaved lad, and so he was regarded as a great acquisition to the party, held in honor of the fifteenth birthday of Farmer Easton's daughter, Jessie, a pretty and vivacious girl, who had a host of admirers, particularly as her parents were well-to-do people who carried on a model farm that was quite profitable. As soon as Sam had introduced his new friend to about half of the assembled company, and then left him in charge of the pretty hostess, to complete the business, he went into the kitchen where several of his cronies were assembled for the time being, and narrated the evening's experience on the road in connection with the old church ruin, which was an object of some awe at night

to all the young people, not to mention their elders.

The other boys stared in wonder when Sam told them that Fred had actually ventured up into the haunted bell tower by himself. And so Fred was looked upon as a most uncommon boy, and his reputation gradually circulated, until everybody had heard of his night's experience in the mysterious old bell tower. The girls talked in whispers about it, and cast admiring glances at the city boy. Jessie Eaton was particularly taken with Fred, and the attention she paid him aroused considerable jealousy among those who aspired to her favor.

These boys, and there was half a dozen of them, took a dislike to Fred, and they began to sneer at his night's adventure. They insinuated around that Sam hadn't stuck to the truth in telling his story as his object was to create a favorable reception for his friend. They agreed that city boys had no business to come out in the country and butt in where they were not wanted, and they decided among themselves to do all they could to down the new fellow with the girls. Fred, unconscious of the jealousy he had aroused in the breasts of some of the evening's guests, made great advances in the estimation of the others, particularly with the girls, and more than all with Miss Jessie, and was having the time of his life when the party finally broke up about one o'clock. Then he and Sam started to return to the village.

CHAPTER III.—The Hold-Up in the Wood.

Singleton was not on the railroad, the nearest station being at the town of Golding, six miles away. The postmaster of the village kept the chief general store, and he sent his boy every afternoon to meet the train that brought down the Singleton mail bag. The post office address of the novelty company was Golding and not Singleton, and all its mail was delivered to the post office of the town, whence it was got in the afternoon by the Singleton postmaster's boy by arrangement, and in the morning by the superintendent of the factory, who lived in Golding and came to the village in his auto at nine o'clock and returned home in it late in the afternoon. On the afternoon following the incident related in the previous chapters, the superintendent came into the office and calling Fred from his desk, handed him a note.

"You will go to town on the mail wagon, get that order filled at the address on the envelope, and return on the wagon," he said.

"All right, sir," said Fred, looking at the clock and noticing that it was close to three.

He put his books in the safe, got his hat and started for the post office. The postmaster's boy was bringing the mail bags out of the store. Fred helped put the bags in the wagon, and then mounting on the seat beside the driver, off they started for town.

"What's your name?" he asked the postmaster's boy.

"Ben Wright," was the reply.

"I guess you're the chap Sam Fields was talking to me about last night," said Fred.

"Sam is a friend of mine. You're the new clerk

at the factory who is living at Sam's house. Your name is Fred Osgood."

"Yes."

"Sam told me about you. He said you were a first-class fellow."

"I'm much obliged to him for saying so. I think Sam a first-class fellow, too."

"What was he saying about me?"

"We went to a party at Farmer Eaton's last night, and we passed the old ruined church with the bell tower on the way."

"We'll pass it on our way to town."

"I see. Well, on our way to the party Sam told me that the old bell tower of the church was haunted," said Fred.

"So it is. I saw the ghost myself one night standing at the door of the church."

"So Sam told me. He said the tavernkeeper's son, Steve Willett, saw it, too, or said he did."

"I guess he did, for his story agrees with mine pretty near."

"I told Sam that I guessed you imagined it was a ghost you saw."

"No, I saw it, all right," said Ben, in a tone of conviction. "My father, when he was a boy, saw the same ghost in the same place, only it looked different to him."

"Sam swears he saw it himself last night at the door, but I didn't see it, though I looked when he called my attention to it."

"That's funny. Was Sam scared?"

"He was a little bit rattled."

"And you both ran on as fast as you could?"

"No, we didn't. As I don't believe in ghosts, I doubted Sam's statement, and I went into the entrance of the church to see if any one was hiding there."

"Did you, really?"

Then Fred told Ben about his experience in the tower, whereat the store boy opened his eyes very wide.

"And don't you believe the place is haunted, after that?"

"I do not," replied Fred emphatically.

"How do you account for the light, and the bell tolling without hands?"

"I've got my private idea on the subject."

"Tell me."

"What's the use? It wouldn't change your opinion about the tower."

"It might," said Ben, but his tone was doubtful.

Fred told him that he believed it was the work of one or more practical jokers.

"But the tower has been haunted for fifty years," said Ben.

"All right. We'll let it go at that," said Fred, as they drove past the ruin.

After that they talked about something else, and after reaching the new road by way of the short cut they arrived at Golding in due time. Ben set Fred down at the store where he had to deliver his note and get a bundle of small hardware, and told him he'd call for him after he got the company's mail bag at the post office.

"I have to wait till it's made up, but that doesn't take long for the letters come off the train in bundles, tied up. It's the registered letters that delay me. I have to sign for them in the company's name."

Ben drove off and Fred entered the store. About half an hour later Ben returned to the

store and found Fred waiting for him. It was half-past four when the boys rode out of Golding and took the road back to the village. The sky was overcast, but there seemed no immediate probability of rain. Half an hour later they left the new road for the old one, via the short cut. Fred suggested that they keep on, as they saved only ten minutes by the cut, and Ben never had any deliveries to make on his way back. His companion said that the two farmers might have a letter or two to be mailed, which he would have to carry to the village post office to be stamped, for he was not allowed to receive any mail from them on his out trip to be mailed at town.

For that reason he was bound to take the short cut both ways to carry out his agreement with the farmers. So they went on into the yard of the first farmhouse and there picked up two letters, which Ben put in his pocket. Then they drove on into the woods. They had got halfway through when the horse fetched up suddenly, as if he had hit an obstruction, the wagon hit his flanks with a shock that threw the boys backward from the seat, Ben barely saving himself from going over on the ground.

Naturally, they were taken by surprise, and for a few moments they floundered about on the bottom of the wagon. The instant the horse fetched up against the invisible obstruction and the boys tumbled backward, men with black crape masks appeared like magic from the bushes and two of them clambered into the wagon, while the third seized the horse by its mouthpiece. As Fred and Tom started to scramble up they were grabbed and thrown back, while a pair of revolvers were thrust at their faces.

"If you chaps utter a sound we'll blow your roofs off," said one of the men.

The boys gasped and stared—they could do nothing else.

CHAPTER IV.—Fred Follows Mail Bag Thieves.

"I'll hold them," said the man who had already threatened the boys. "You chuck the bags out, Jim."

Jim shoved his gun in his pocket and, pulling the two mail bags from under the seat, threw them on the ground.

"Now, then, we'll tie and gag them and then we'll be off," said the other.

The chap who was holding the horse was called on to assist. Jim pulled some pieces of rope from his pocket and speedily bound Ben's arms behind his back, while the other gagged the boy with his handkerchief. Fred was served in the same way. The rascals then jumped out of the wagon, grabbed the mail bags, and drove on into the woods. The boys, left to themselves, struggled to get free, but at first the task seemed a vain one. At the end of ten minutes Fred had stretched the strands of his bonds enough to gradually work one of his arms out, and that freed him. He pulled the gag from his mouth and also from Ben's.

"Holy mackerel!" were the first words Ben uttered. "Those fellows have stolen the two mail bags. Mr. Pendleton will have a fit when I get back without them, and what he won't do to me isn't worth mentioning."

"Those rascals must be pursued and captured before they can get away," said Fred, as he cut the last strand that held Ben's arms. "There, you are free now. Drive on to the village as fast as you can go, and notify the constable. Go to his office before you face the music at the store. Hurry now!"

"What are you going to do? Aren't you coming along?"

"No; I'm going to follow those mail-bag thieves and try and trace them to their hiding place. They won't carry those bags any farther than they can help, for they know better than to be seen with them in their possession. I'll bet they'll stop and open them somewhere in the woods, pick out the registered letters, and let the others slide."

Ben grabbed the reins and shouted, "Gee up!"

The horse started ahead about a foot, and then stopped suddenly as before.

"Get up, will you!" roared Ben, slapping the animal with the end of the reins.

The horse made an effort, but something appeared to hold him back. Fred went to the horse's head to see what was the trouble, and found out. A piece of thin wire was stretched across the path and made fast to a tree on either side.

"Those rascals stretched a wire across here," he said to Ben. "That's what brought us up standing in the first place. Your horse has a long cut across his chest where he hit the wire the first time. The wound is quite deep and is bleeding considerable. He must be attended to as soon as possible."

Fred freed one end of the wire and flung it across the path.

"Now, go on," he said, and Ben started up.

As the rig disappeared through the trees, Fred started off in the direction taken by the mail-bag thieves. They had a quarter of an hour's start of him at least. The chances of overtaking them were exceedingly doubtful unless they stopped to cut open the pouches. He believed they would stop somewhere in the wood to rifle the bags of the registered mail, and then abandon the bags with the rest of their contents.

They could not unlock the bags, of course, but that didn't matter, for a sharp knife would rip a gash in their sides large enough to enable the rascals to take out what was in them. If he came up with them he did not intend to show himself, for what could he do against three men armed with revolvers?

Finally he reached the end of the wood and found himself on the edge of a cultivated field. A quarter of a mile away was a farmhouse, and as far beyond it the old road to Golding and other places. He knew it was the old road, because on the left rose the old bell tower. He struck out for the farmhouse to learn if three men had been seen crossing one of the fields, with or without the stolen mail-bags. He saw a hand at work at the far end of the field and he went over to him. The man quit work and looked at him.

"Say, did you see three men making for the road from the wood within the last fifteen or twenty minutes?" asked Fred, when he came up to the field hand.

"Three men? No," said the man, shaking his head.

"Then I guess they're still in the wood. They held up the mail wagon and stole two mail pouches," said Fred.

While he was talking he had his eyes on the wood and the neighboring field. Suddenly he saw one man walk out of the wood and cross the next field.

"Look yonder," he said to the hired man. "I believe that's one of the mail-bag thieves."

The hired man looked.

"You said there were three men," he said.

"There were, but they may have separated for the time being. I'm going to watch that man and see which direction he takes along the road."

Fred started for the farmyard, which he crossed and made his way to the lane, hurrying down that to the road. Before he reached it he saw Ben driving at a quick pace toward the village. The wounded horse had a cloth tied around his chest. Evidently, Ben had stopped at the Thompson farm and the farmer had attended to the animal's cut. This would account for Ben being still on the road when Fred supposed he had already reached the village.

Fred reached the road before the man and waited at the gate to take note of his movements as soon as he got over the fence. The fellow clambered over the fence in a leisurely way and then started up the road, or in the opposite direction from the village. He was too far off for the boy to be certain that he was one of the thieves. Furthermore, he seemed to be in no hurry. Then the fact that he was alone made his identity still more doubtful.

On the whole, the only suspicious circumstance against him was the fact that he had come out of the wood, which under ordinary conditions would not have been suspicious at all. Fred watched him in an undecided way. Finally he saw him cross over to the old church ruin, look up and down the road, and then disappear through the doorway. Fred's suspicions were aroused again. The old ruin, it struck him, would be a good temporary hiding place for those rascals, as nobody ever went there. While he was wondering if the other two had preceded the man he had seen, he saw another man get over the fence farther on, drop into the road, walk as far as the church, and vanish into it. Satisfied he had accomplished all that could be expected of him, Fred started down the road at a rapid walk.

CHAPTER V.—The Search for the Mail Bags.

It took Fred ten minutes to reach the outskirts of the village, and less than ten more to make the post office and general store presided over by Mr. Pendleton. He rushed in and found the postmaster waiting on a woman at the dry goods counter.

"Have you seen Ben?" Fred asked him.

"No; he hasn't got back from Golding yet," was the reply.

Then Mr. Pendleton peered more closely at the boy through his glasses.

"Seems to me you are the boy who started to make the trip to town and back with him, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir, I went with him, and returned with him as far as the wood on Farmer Thompson's property. While driving through the wood the wagon was held up by three masked men, who bound and gagged Ben and me, and then got away with the mail pouches."

"What!" exclaimed the postmaster. "Do you mean to say the mail bags have been stolen?"

"I am sorry to say they have. Unless the rascals are captured soon, it will subject our company to some loss and a great deal of trouble."

"But if the village mail bag is gone, too, I shall be in a nice fix. Where is Ben? It's his duty to report the matter to me, not you."

"I advised him to go and see the constable before he came here, so that no time should be lost. He has doubtless done so. I hope he brings the constable here, as I have discovered where the rascals are hiding."

"Where?" asked Mr. Pendleton.

"I'll tell you after you finish with your customer."

The woman listened eagerly to the news. She was one of Singleton's most industrious gossips, and it was certain she would lose no time in spreading the tale, with such embellishments as suggested themselves to her fertile mind. With that purpose already formed in her mind, she hurriedly completed her purchases and left the store.

"Well," said the postmaster, turning to Fred, "where are the rascals hiding?"

"In the old church ruins."

"How do you know?"

"I saw two of them enter the place."

"I thought you said that the men bound and gagged you and Ben?"

"So they did, but I managed to free myself, and then I cut Ben loose."

"But the wood is nearly half a mile from the ruined church."

"I know it is. After sending Ben forward with the wagon, I followed after the thieves, hoping to overtake them. My object was to note where they went, if possible, so as to be able to put the constable on their track."

"You overtook them and tracked them to the church with the mail-pouches?"

"They didn't have the mail bags with them, the two I saw. They left the wood singly. It's my opinion that they cut open the pouches, took possession of the registered letters, and then abandoned the rest of the mail in the wood."

Fred was telling him how he followed the direction he supposed the men had taken when Ben and the chief constable of the village entered the store. A consultation followed and Fred told the officer about seeing two men, whom he believed were the thieves, because they had come from the wood, enter the old church ruin.

"That's where they're hiding for the time being, take my word for it," said Fred. "You'd better get a posse together and go there after them."

"They were masked when they attacked you two," said the constable.

"Yes," replied Fred.

"Will you be able to identify them with their masks off?"

"I guess we will; don't you think so, Ben?"

"Sure; but if you catch them, Mr. Smith, you'll

find the money from the registered letters on them, and that ought to be proof enough."

"You boys had better go right back to the wood and hunt for the mail pouches," said the postmaster. "People will begin coming in presently and asking if there are any letters or papers for them, and I shall have a nice time explaining the situation to them. Some of them are bound to blame me, for I am considered responsible for everything that takes place in connection with the post office."

"Is the wagon outside, Ben?" asked Fred.

"Yes."

"I must leave that package that I fetched from town at the office, and then I'll go with you to the wood. It's half-past five, nearly, and the factory will close down for the day in a few minutes."

The boys got in the wagon and drove to the novelty works. The cashier and the other clerk were getting ready to leave. The former was waiting for the mail pouch so that he could put the letters in the safe overnight. He was somewhat staggered when Fred told him what had happened.

"The superintendent will be wild when he gets here in the morning," he said.

"It can't be helped. The trick was pulled off on us so slick that we didn't have the least chance to save the mail bags," said Fred. "The rascals had revolvers, and they could have shot us several times over had they a mind to."

"Well, I'm not blaming you or Wright," said the cashier.

"We're going over to the wood now to look for the pouches and whatever letters the fellows left behind them. Maybe by the time the superintendent gets here you'll have the money that was in the registered mail, too."

Outside, Fred and Ben met Sam coming out of the employees' entrance.

"Come on with us, Sam," said Fred.

"Where are you going?"

"Over to the woods back of Farmer White's place."

"What are you going there for?" asked Sam curiously.

"Jump in the wagon and I'll tell you. When you hear about what Ben and I ran up against in those woods an hour or more ago, you'll sit up and take notice."

Sam's curiosity was at once excited, and he got up in the wagon. On their way Fred and Ben told him the particulars of the hold-up. Naturally Sam was much astonished.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "You fellows were up against it sure. I wonder where those rascals came from?"

"I couldn't tell you, but I know where they're hiding," said Fred.

"Where?" asked Sam.

"In the old church ruins."

"You don't mean it."

"If I didn't, I wouldn't say so."

"You told the constable, of course?"

"Certainly I did."

"Then they'll be caught and the registered letters recovered."

"I hope so. If we find some of the envelopes in the rascals' possession we'll get the money back."

The boys left the wagon in the yard and start-

ed across the field, entering the wood about where Fred had come out at. They spread themselves out a few yards apart and looked carefully around as they went forward. When they came to the first line of bushes they tramped back and forth through it, examining every yard of it thoroughly. This was slow work, the light was very poor, owing to the trees and the dull sky, and the chances of success appeared to be against them. After they had been in the wood three-quarters of an hour it became so dark there that Sam said they had better quit, as he didn't see any use of continuing the search.

"We'll meet at half-past seven in the morning and come back here," he said.

At that moment Fred tripped over something in the bushes. He stooped and felt of the obstruction. It was the company's leather mail pouch.

"Eureka!" he cried, holding it up so that his companions could see it.

"Hurrah!" shouted Sam and Ben, in a breath.

"Get in here and look for the other bag," said Fred.

Sam and Ben began kicking around in the bushes with fresh vigor. In a few minutes the village mail bag came to light. Both pouches had been slit open with a sharp knife. Not a letter of any kind remained in the company's bag, only a number of papers and pamphlets. The village letters were always tied up in packet form. The string had been cut and the letters run over. There was no way of telling how many, if any, had been taken. If there had been any registered letters, they were gone. On the way back the boys showed the pouches to Farmer White.

Then the boys returned to the village in the dusk and the two pouches were handed over to Mr. Pendleton, who was doing his best to reassure a crowd of the residents who had flocked to his store as soon as they learned that the mail wagon had been stopped and robbed. The appearance of the boys with the pouches was greeted with some enthusiasm. The postmaster dumped out the contents of the Government bag on his counter and remarked that he guessed the mail was all there. Fred and Sam left him distributing it in the lettered boxes, and started for home and their belated supper.

CHAPTER VI.—Fred's Second Visit to the Tower.

After supper the boys returned to the post office to find out what the constable and his posse had accomplished. They had not got back.

"Let's go up to the ruin and see how they are getting on," said Fred.

Sam was willing, for he expected to find the constable's party on the spot. Ben couldn't go, as his services were in demand at the store until it was closed, so Fred and Sam went on by themselves. A brisk walk brought them to the ruin, but it looked dark and deserted as it always did at night.

"Come on," said Fred, and he stepped into the vestibule, but Sam hung back.

"They aren't here," he said. "If they were we could hear them moving about and see the light, for they couldn't do anything in the dark. They

have failed to get the rascals and are looking for them somewhere else."

"Come in, anyway, and we'll have a look into the body of the church."

"What's the use?" said Sam, whose courage was not proof against the gloom and silence of the old ruin, which he believed to be haunted from the ground floor up.

"What are you afraid of? Think you'll see the ghost of the old sexton?" chuckled Fred.

"I'd rather stay outside. You can go in if you want to."

Fred opened the creaking door and looked into the church proper. Not a sound reached his ears, nor a gleam of light his eyes. Clearly the constable and his party were not there. He returned to Sam.

"The constable's party is not here, and it seems evident that they missed the mail bag robbers," he said.

"I told you," said Sam. "Let's get back."

"Wait a minute. I'm going to take off my shoes and sneak up to the tower."

"What for?"

"Just to satisfy myself that the rascals are not up there."

"The constable would have found them if they went there."

"I'm going up, anyway."

"All right, go if you're determined on it. You will find me on the other side of the road."

Fred slipped off his shoes and went slowly up the winding stairs, making not a sound. He paused at the foot of the ladder and listened, but not a sound reached him from above. Then he ascended the ladder and poked his head up the trap. The bell tower was wrapped in gloom, for the night was comparatively dark. He stopped and listened again. Satisfied no one was there, he finished his ascent and struck a match. Everything looked just the same as on his visit the night before. He saw something white lying on the floor, near the window. He picked it up and saw that it was an envelope. It was addressed to the company and bore the registry stamp.

"Those rascals have been here," thought the boy. "Probably this is where they went through the letters they carried off. The window commands a fine view of the road from the village, and one of them watched while the other two worked. When the constable's party came up the road the watcher piped them off and gave notice of their approach. The rascals, fearing it might not be safe to remain here, took time by the forelock and sneaked away. That's why they were not caught."

Fred then returned to Sam, showed him what he had found, and they started for the village. Next morning when Fred appeared at the office before the cashier and the other clerk, he found a boy standing at the door with a package in his hand. Fred looked at him inquiringly as he unlocked the door.

"I'm Steve Willett," said the boy, introducing himself.

"I've heard about you from Sam Fields. Your father keeps the tavern just off Main street."

"He does. You're the new clerk at this place. Your name is Osgood."

"Correct. Are you here on an errand?"

"Yes. When I opened up the place this mornin'

I found this package outside the front door. I opened it and found that it contained envelopes addressed to the novelty company. It struck me right away that it was the mail you were robbed of yesterday afternoon. It's all been opened and the money taken out. I showed it to my old man, and he told me to fetch it over here," said Steve, handing the package to Fred.

"Thanks," said Fred. "One of those rascals must have left it at your door during the night."

"Sure thing, or I wouldn't have found it there."

"I was in hopes that the constable and his party had nabbed them."

"Smith couldn't catch nothin'," said Steve, with a grin.

"What makes you think he couldn't?"

"I know he couldn't. He couldn't catch them fellers, anyway. They're too smart for him."

He spoke in an exultant tone that attracted Fred's attention.

"How do you know they are too smart for the constable?" he said.

"Oh, because he ain't no good," said Steve evasively. "So long; I've got to get back and clean up the barroom."

He turned on his heel and sauntered off with his hands in his pocket, the perfect picture of an irresponsible young chap. Fred took the package inside and placed it on the cashier's desk. The other clerk came in about this time. He asked Fred if he had found the mail bags in the wood.

"Yes, we found them in the bushes. The village mail was not taken by the rascals, at least the postmaster thought none of it was missing. All our letters, registered and otherwise, were carried off. Only third-class matter was left in the pouch. The rascals coolly left the envelopes in a bundle at the door of Willett's tavern during the night. Steve Willett found it there this morning and brought it over here. There it is on the cashier's desk," said Fred.

"If they left the enclosures in the envelopes it will enable us to fill the orders at our loss, and save us having a lot of trouble and correspondence with the customers," said the clerk. "I take it, then, that the constable didn't catch them."

"No. I haven't heard that he was so fortunate. I have evidence in my pocket that the robbers were up in the old bell tower, but they left before the constable and his men got there."

"What evidence?"

"The envelope of a registered letter which I found on the floor."

"You were up there yourself?"

"I was. Sam Fields and I went to the ruins, thinking to find the constable and his party there, but there was nobody there when we arrived."

At that point the cashier came in, and Fred told him how the package of envelopes reached the office. He also told him about the recovery of the mail pouches.

"So the rascals took all our letters?" he said.

"Every one."

"I hope they didn't destroy the money orders they found in them. They couldn't possibly collect the money, so it would have been a needless piece of rascality to do us out of them."

Fred, the other clerk, whose name was Jones, and the cashier examined all the envelopes. They

did not expect to find anything in most of them, since the robbers could hardly be expected to have given any attention to the company's interests. Much to their surprise they found that every envelope contained its written enclosure, including the money orders, but all money, as well as postage stamps, had been removed. Thus the cashier was able to figure up the exact loss which the company had sustained.

CHAPTER VII.—The Burglary.

Several days passed and nothing was heard of the mail bag robbers. The police of Golding and the constables of many surrounding places had kept an eye out for them, but saw nothing of any men resembling their description. The people of Singleton had stopped talking about the incident, and the cashier of the novelty company had carried the loss to the account of profit and loss. Then the unexpected happened again. The cashier's house was entered during the night by three masked men, and cleaned out of all portable articles of value. Cashier Black and his wife were found gagged and bound in bed by the servant the next morning, and the news spread around the village like wildfire. The description given by the cashier of the thieves corresponded in a general way with that of the mail bag robbers, and everybody jumped to the conclusion that they were the same rascals. Fred and Clerk Jones were waiting for the cashier to show up and open the safe so they could get to work on their books, which were always locked up overnight, when Ben Wright rushed into the office and told the news.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Fred. "Is that a fact?"

"Sure's you live it is," answered Ben. "And the same fellows did it."

"The same fellows! Who do you mean?"

"The mail bag robbers."

"How do you know?" asked Fred, with excited interest.

"Because Mr. Black says there were three of them, and his description of them tallies somewhat with the chaps who done you and me up."

"Then they must have been hiding in the neighborhood since they stole the mail pouches."

"That's right."

"And the constable was sure they had escaped from the county."

"Oh, his opinion isn't worth a whole lot. He'll have to get busy now and do something, or he may lose his fat job."

"I'm surprised he has held it so long."

"He's got a political pull, and he's never had anything very serious to buck against."

"There must be a lot of excitement in the village this morning."

"There is. Our store and Willett's tavern are crowded."

"What time in the night did the men enter Mr. Black's house?"

"About midnight."

"Did they take much?"

"Did they! He says they cleaned him out of everything portable worth taking away."

"By George, that's tough on him!"

"Bet your boots it is."

"The rascals have probably made off this time. They'll want to dispose of their plunder as soon as they can. When did Mr. Black report the robbery?"

"About an hour ago. He and his wife, you see, were left bound and gagged in their bedroom, and they had to stay that way till the servant came up to see why they did not come to breakfast. They made no answer to her knocks, and she got frightened, thinking something was wrong. She finally ventured to try the door, found it unlocked, entered, and discovered their predicament. She released them, and as soon as possible Mr. Black went around to notify the constable of what had happened."

"This is the first robbery of importance you've had in the village for a long time, isn't it?"

"Yes. Constable Smith has got to get a move on now and show cause for drawing his pay. If he fails to show results he's going to get in bad with the people."

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the superintendent. He was surprised to see the two clerks idle, but the closed safe was a sufficient explanation.

"Hasn't Mr. Black arrived yet?" he asked Fred.

"No, sir; he's late this morning. We've just heard that the house was robbed last night," replied Fred, as Ben started to return to the store.

"Robbed!" exclaimed the superintendent, in a tone of astonishment.

"By three men who are suspected of being the same who stole the mail bags."

"Well, that's hard luck for Mr. Black. Did you hear how much he lost?"

"He claims to have been cleaned out of everything of value the men could take away."

"My, my! I must go around and call on him. I'll open the safe first so you young men can get to work," said the superintendent.

As soon as the safe was open the superintendent handed Fred the mail pouch he had brought as usual from Golding.

"You had better go over the mail this morning," he said to the boy. "Make a record of the cash, stamps and money orders and hand it with the total receipts to Mr. Black when he arrives. It is necessary that some one should attend to this matter at once so that there may be no delay in making the shipments."

The superintendent then left the office.

"What do you think Mr. Black will do about this affair, Jones?" said Fred, as he began opening the letters and examining their contents.

"Will he depend on the village constable to capture the rascals and recover his property, or will he ask the Golding police to help him out?"

"He'll call on the Golding police, of course, to give Constable Smith a hand."

"I should hope so. Smith doesn't strike me as a very good thief-taker. He might have caught these rascals if he'd gone the right way about it. He had a straight tip from me that the men were hiding in the old church ruin. What did he do but drive with his men openly up to the front door, which gave them all the opportunity they needed to slip out the back way? Any one would know that the robbers would expect pursuit and keep watch on the road. The constable ought to have scattered his party and directed them to

approach the ruin from different directions. Instead of taking all his party into the church at once, he ought to have left enough outside to watch the front and back exits. Had he done things that way, I think he would have got the men."

"Very likely," nodded Jones.

"After he failed to get them he came back and reported to the superintendent that they had left the neighborhood and were probably fifty miles away by that time. I'll bet that they were watching the constable and his party all the time they were searching the ruins, and when the posse started to scour the neighborhood they slipped back into the place and have been there ever since."

"Do you think they are still hiding there?"

"I won't say that they are now, after last night's job. It would be to their interest to get away as far as they could with their plunder before the robbery was discovered. They probably had four or five hours to do it in. They could have walked to Golding and taken the seven o'clock train, which would have landed them in Boston about this time."

"If that is so, then Black may say good-by to his valuables."

"Just as we've said good-by to our money."

After that the office was silent for a while, and the two clerks worked industriously to make up lost time.

CHAPTER VIII.—Fred Visits Jessie Eaton.

Before he took his leave with Sam, on the night of the party, Fred received a pressing invitation from Jessie Eaton to call on her as soon as he could find it convenient to do so. He promised to call some Sunday evening soon. Jessie told him to call early, before dark, and have tea. On the second Sunday, three days after the burglary, Fred decided to keep his engagement with Farmer Eaton's fair daughter. Sam was going to see his girl that evening, and though Fred had an invitation from Jones to visit him, he thought Jessie's society preferable. Accordingly, he started for Farmer Eaton's at four o'clock. It was a fine afternoon and the fields along the old county road looked fine in the sunshine with their growing crops.

He looked up at the old bell tower as he passed the church ruin. The ivy was already springing into life from the ground to the very top of the tower. In a short time it would be one thick mass of green leaves, and much of its venerable appearance would be hidden from sight.

"What changes the world has seen since that building was originally put up!" thought the boy. "It is older than the present United States Government. When its foundations were laid, George III was king of England, and this State was one of the most promising of his American colonies. George Washington, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and other great Americans were alive, and the War of the Revolution was yet to be fought out. If stones could talk, what a tale could those in that old bell tower unfold!"

Fred passed on and duly arrived at the Eaton farm, where he received a royal welcome, not only from Jessie, but from her father and mother as well, for they were very hospitable people, and

had taken a liking to the city boy. Before darkness fell Jessie took Fred about the large yard and showed him the model barn and other out-buildings, the stable and her own handsome pony, the henneries, the duck pond and ducks and the young turkeys. Every building on the place was a model of cleanliness, and showed the pride of the farmer to keep things right up to date. Tea was ready when they returned to the house, and Fred sat down to a repast that made his mouth water.

There were no extras, except perhaps some special winter preserves, on his account, for he had not actually been expected, though it is true Jessie looked for him any Sunday afternoon. After supper they adjourned to the front porch, for the air was quite comfortable, where they were afterward joined by the farmer and his wife, and Jessie's grandfather, a hale old man of eighty-eight years, Joshua Warren by name. The old man had lived on that farm all his life. In fact, he was born on it, for the place had been in possession of the Warrens before the days of the Revolution. He had presented it to his daughter when she married George Eaton, and eventually it would come to Jessie, the Eatons' only child, if she lived long enough.

Fred was much interested in Joshua Warren because he was a bright old man and could remember things that had happened in that neighborhood nearly eighty years back. He was born shortly after the close of the War of 1812, and he was full of anecdotes about that contest. He also remembered a great deal that he had heard when young about the Revolution.

When he got well started on the "Road to Yesterday," there was no stopping him, and the fact that Fred was a comparative stranger in that vicinity, and showed himself a good listener, got the old man going that evening, somewhat to Jessie's displeasure, for she wanted Fred largely to herself, as she considered him her special company. Her mother saw how it was and tried various stratagems to choke her father off, but it was no go. The old man had got wound up on his favorite topic and persisted in unreeling enough recollections to fill a book. It wasn't often he got hold of a subject like Fred—somebody who was quite new to that locality—and so Joshua Warren spread himself, while he smoked a long clay pipe, a duplicate of which it probably would have been impossible to find in America.

After talking for a good hour and a half, with hardly any intermission, the old man got his second wind, which meant that he was good for another hour at least. Jessie looked despairingly at her mother, who shook her head. Old man Warren was touchy and easily offended, and neither mother nor daughter wished to hurt his feelings, for he was fast nearing the last muster-roll, and they desired to make his final days as pleasant as possible. Fred was so interested in the old man's talks that he hardly thought of the lovely girl at his side.

"I suppose you've noticed the old ruined church with its bell tower down the road," said Joshua Warren, filling and lighting his pipe for the sixth time.

"Oh, yes," replied Fred. "It is a picturesque old ruin and it interests me greatly. Of course, you remember when it was the only church in

this neighborhood, and the community worshipped there."

"Yes, yes, I remember it. I was married in that church when hardly a corporal's guard attended it of a Sunday. My eldest daughter, who is dead, was the last child christened in it. It was shortly afterward abandoned, for the old guard, of which I was one, could not, by ourselves, afford to pay the necessary expenses of its maintenance, including the minister's salary, though that was not large in those days. Ministers nowadays get a lot more, and some of them don't do half as much for it."

"I wish you'd tell me one thing about that church," said Fred.

"What is it?" asked the old man, looking at him.

"How came the bell tower to get the reputation of being haunted?"

Joshua Warren chuckled for some moments.

"So you've heard the story of the old sexton's ghost, eh?" he said.

"Yes, and I think it's all nonsense."

"Don't you believe in ghosts?" and the speaker chuckled again.

"I do not."

"Then you're different from most people around here and elsewhere. I doubt if any one in this neighborhood would venture up into that old bell tower alone of a night for a hundred dollars, or more than that."

"Mr. Osgood has done it, grandpa," put in Jessie. "He went there the night of my party, and he had a very curious experience, too."

"So you really went up there in the darkness all by yourself," said the old man to Fred. "Since you were not afraid, what experience did you have?"

Fred repeated the story of that night for his benefit.

"So the bell struck while you were up there, and you saw the clapper move of itself?" he said.

"Yes."

"And the tower was illuminated for a moment with a red light?"

"Yes, sir."

Joshua Warren scratched his ear.

"That was certainly strange, I'll allow, and I can't account for it. Soon after the church was abandoned, maybe five years or so, that bell took to ringing in a most mysterious way. It didn't ring just three times, as it's lately been doing, but intermittently. Sometimes once and sometimes a dozen times of a night. There seemed no reason for it, as nobody was known to go up there, and that gave the tower its reputation of being haunted by the ghost of the old sexton. It began to be reported about by different people when they had seen a white shape at the vestibule door, or at the window of the bell tower overlooking the road. That confirmed the popular belief, and so the tower came to be regarded as haunted."

"Did anybody ever find out what made the bell ring?"

"A nephew, he's dead now, who was a sailor, though most sailors are superstitious, he was not in those days, he wasn't. He paid a visit to me, and I told him about the ghostly story. When I was talking the bell rang several times. He offered to let me that he would visit

the tower then and there and find out what caused the bell to ring."

"Did he?"

"He did, and when he came back he told me that a colony of owls roosted up there and that they often made the bell ring."

"They did?"

"Yes. As they flew back and forth they hit the clapper at times and set it in motion until it acquired momentum enough to reach the bell and sound a peal."

"That was an odd but perfectly natural explanation of the matter. You told the people, I suppose?"

"No, I did not, for I had an idea that they wouldn't believe the explanation. You see, when people are thoroughly convinced about a thing it is not an easy matter to alter their views."

"Well, I intend to investigate that bell tower in the daylight at the first chance I get, and I'll bet I'll discover a perfectly natural cause to account for the bell tolling three times, as it has been doing lately. It is my firm opinion that some practical joker is at the back of it."

"I'll tell you something that might add interest to your investigations."

"What is that?"

"There is a chest of English sovereigns said to be hidden somewhere in that bell tower."

"There is?" cried Fred, much astonished.

"There was once upon a time, whether it is there now or not."

"It's a wonder the tower wasn't pulled down to find it."

"The story was not generally known, and those who heard it put little dependence in its truth. My father told it to me, as he heard it, and I made a careful search of the tower at the time, but could find no evidence that such a chest had ever been hidden in the place, so I came to the conclusion that it had either been taken away long since, or had never been hidden there. The story runs that after the Revolutionary War started and the British were cooped up in Boston, Ezekiel Dobbs, a rabid old Tory, who lived in this neighborhood and was accounted wealthy, as riches were figured in those days, discovered that his anti-patriot sentiments had rendered him so unpopular that it would be well for his interests to make a change of base. Accordingly, he hastened to turn all his property into ready money and prepared to leave the Commonwealth. His plans becoming known, some daring spirits made up their minds to shear him of his money and otherwise to express their disapproval of the British opinions he had so publicly expressed before the Patriots finally resorted to actual hostilities with the mother country."

"Dobbs was a leading member of the old stone church, which had then been built but a year or two. In some way he received warning of what was coming, and in his panic, finding that he could not escape with his wealth, he hid his chest of gold in the bell tower of the church and fled just in the nick of time. According to the story, he never returned to claim his money, and when my father was a boy a select few believed that the old Tory's wealth was hidden somewhere about the bell tower of the church. Doubtless they hunted for it, but whether they found it or not was never known," concluded the old man, knock-

ing the ashes out of his pipe and making a motion to put it in his pocket, which was a sure sign that his loquacity had run down at last. He got up, bade Fred and the others good night, and retired to his room. The farmer and his wife followed his example, and then Fred said to Jessie that he guessed it was time for him to go.

"You will come soon again, won't you?" she said, as she bade him good night.

He promised that he would, and then they parted, more than ever taken with one another.

CHAPTER IX.—Fred Makes a Find at the Ruin.

The night was clear and charming, though moonless, as Fred walked back to the village, his thoughts divided between Jessie Eaton and the interesting reminiscences related that evening by her grandfather. As the road was quite dusty, he kept close in to the fence where the turf afforded pretty good walking. It took him about half an hour to reach the vicinity of the church ruin, and he sat down opposite to it to take a brief rest, and to think about the old Tory, dead and gone for over a hundred years and the chest of gold he was supposed to have hidden in the bell tower.

"If he really hid his gold up in that tower, I'll bet it didn't remain there long. He either returned on the sly and got it, or somebody else got a rise in life out of it," thought Fred. "At any rate, it isn't in the bell tower now."

As he mused, with his eyes on the tower, he suddenly noticed an object at the window. It wasn't a sheeted figure, nor did it have the form of a human being, but as well as the boy could make out it seemed to be a huge bird, something like an owl. Joshua Warren's story of the colony of owls, whose movements had rung the bell many years since, recurred to his mind, and he wondered if the object really was an owl.

"It looks to be many times larger than any owl I've ever seen," he thought.

He watched it intently, but could not make up his mind as to what it really was. After looking up and down the road, apparently, the object disappeared. Fred kept his eyes on the window, but it did not reappear.

"I wonder what it was?" Fred asked himself.

At that moment he saw what he at first took to be a man coming up the road from the direction of the village, but he soon made out that it was a boy, carrying a fair-sized basket. The boy came on slowly and when he got close Fred recognized him as Steve Willett, the tavernkeeper's son. Willett left the middle of the road as he drew near the old ruin, and then to Fred's surprise walked up to the door and entered the place. Fred's suspicions were at once aroused.

"What in thunder is bringing Steve Willett to that place at this hour of the night—and with a basket, too? Is he going to hide something?"

Fred determined to find out if he could, so he crossed the road and looked into the vestibule. Nobody was there as far as he could see.

"He must have gone into the body of the church. Or perhaps he has gone up to the bell tower. Evidently Steve is not afraid of the rats. I'll bet he's the joker who rings the bell. The boys at the party said Willett didn't have the

courage to come here after dark. It is clear they are wrong. Yes, I feel sure he's gone to the tower, and the bell will probably ring presently."

Fred slipped off his shoes and ran up to the room above. There he stopped and listened. He heard voices in the tower—men's voices.

"Steve isn't the only person in this place. I wonder what's up?"

Curious to get an inkling of the mystery, for there must be a mystery in the presence of the bunch, he reasoned, Fred put his shoes down at the foot of the ladder and softly mounted the rungs. He stopped just underneath the trap. Judging from the voices, there were at least two men up there, and Steve was there, too. Fred was decidedly interested in the reason of this congregation in the bell tower, for it indicated something was in the wind. People don't meet secretly without having some definite object in view. The talk above floated down to the city boy's ears.

"You're a brick, Steve. I don't know what we should have done without you," said a rough voice. "And your old man is a brick, too. We're goin' to make it all right with both of you. Here's a dollar's worth of postage stamps for you. You can sell 'em to people you know. You sold the others I gave you, didn't you?"

"Yep," replied Steve. "It's easy gettin' rid of 'em."

"That's what I thought. This is prime ham, and the bread and butter melts in your mouth. It tastes mighty good, for we ran out of grub this mornin', and we've been watchin' fer you to bring some more for the last two or three hours. Why didn't you come before?"

"My old man said I had better not come out here till things got quiet around the village so that nobody would see me carryin' the basket. Everybody knows me, and they might wonder what I was doin' out with the basket on Sunday evenin'," replied Steve.

"What business is it of anybody what you are doin' with the basket? It ain't no crime to carry one that I know of. You might be carryin' a bottle of liquor to one of your old man's customers."

"It's against the law to sell liquor on Sunday, or to carry it on the street. If one of the constables met me and insisted on lookin' into the basket, he'd have seen not only the grub, but the bottle of whisky I brought you, and he'd have pulled me in. I'd have been asked who I was carryin' the stuff to. I'd had to tell Smith it was none of his business, and he'd have locked me up, and to-morrow mornin' I'd be brought up before the justice. See what a hole I'd have been in."

"That's right," said another voice. "Steve was right to be cautious about comin' here. Did your old woman make this pie? It's scrumptious."

"Has the constable given up huntin' for us?" asked the first speaker.

Those words settled the identity of the men in the bell tower with Fred. He no longer had the least doubt that they were the mail bag robbers as well as the chaps who had burglarized Cashier Black's house. What a nerve they had to remain in the neighborhood after the two crimes! It was evident that they had the greatest contempt for Constable Smith as an officer of the law.

"Yes; he told the superintendent of the novelty works that the three burglars must have gone to Boston right after they finished their job, for he couldn't find any trace of them, though he had had all his men, as well as three specials, out scourin' the country for fifteen miles around or more."

The three men who were eating the provender Steve had brought them laughed uproariously at that.

"He's a smart constable!" chuckled the first speaker. "Such chaps as him are pie for us."

"How long are you goin' to hang out here?" asked Steve.

"I dunno, sonny. It all depends on the chances of pullin' off another job. The village bank looks temptin'. If we could get into that and clean it out, we'd cut our sticks."

"You might crack it if you've got the tools. The watchman is an old fossil, but he's got a gun and would give the alarm if he heard you tryin' to get in the back way."

"How is it protected in the bank? I mean besides the bars on the winders and the iron door. Bates investigated the place when we first came here, but he couldn't find out anythin' we wanted to know."

"There's a wooden door inside the iron one and both are kept barred at night," said Steve. "You couldn't get in that way. You might through the cellar. There are two winders with rusty old bars which you might dig out of their sockets with the right tools. Once you got down under the gratin' nobody would see you workin', and I guess the watchman never would suspect you were there. I dunno whether he goes into the cellar at night to look around or not, but you could see him through the winders if he did and lay low till he left. The hardest job you'd have would be to get the gratin' loose so you could get down underneath it. The watchman, or one of the constables, or somebody else might see you workin' at it and that would put a stop to your business."

"We'll have to figure it out or give it up. By the way, Steve, we've got all our swag boxed up ready to send on to Boston, to the address of a pal. When can you call for it and take it to Golding, where you can ship it by Adams Express, charges collect?"

"I guess I can get it to-morrer. Where'll you put it so I kin find it easily?"

"The floorin' downstairs under the stairs is loose. We'll put it under the boards early in the mornin' and you'll find it there when you come for it."

"All right. That's a good place," said Steve. "Well, I guess I'll be goin' back. You want to send my old man a couple of dollars. He told me to ask you."

"Here you are. The grub is worth it." Fred decided that it was time for him to retreat lest his presence be discovered, so he slipped down the ladder, picked up his shoes, and made for the stairs. As he started to go down he butted right into a man who was coming up. The fellow uttered a deep imprecation and grabbed him by the arms in a firm grip.

CHAPTER X.—Constable Smith Is Incredulous.

"Who are you?" demanded the man, in a menacing tone.

On the spur of the moment it occurred to Fred to pass himself off as the tavernkeeper's son.

"I'm Steve, of course; who did you think I was?" he said, trying to imitate the tones of young Willett.

The man saw he had hold of a boy, and Fred's reply deceived him.

"Oh, it's you, is it? Did you bring the grub?"

"Sure I did. Your share is waitin' for you—ham, bread and pie."

"Good enough. I'm hungry as blazes. When'll you be back?"

"To-morrer mornin' after the box. So-long, I'm in a hurry. My old man told me to rush back."

The man stepped aside so he could pass, and walked over to the ladder, down which Steve was just coming. What happened when the two met Fred did not linger to learn. It was necessary for him to make tracks pretty quick. He got into his shoes and started down the road on the run.

"It was unfortunate I ran against that fellow, for now the rascals will take the alarm and get away from here before the constable can get after them. I don't see how they'll be able to carry away that box of plunder, though. They'll doubtless hide it in a different place than they mentioned, and have Steve send it on to them after a while. I would have recovered that in the morning in the spot they intended to put it under the stairs, but the fat is in the fire now," thought Fred, as he hurried along.

He reached the village inside of ten minutes. Not a soul was stirring on the streets, nor was there a light in any house. People went to bed early in Singleton, and there was nothing doing in the stores on Sunday night, while Willett's tavern, which kept open week nights till about twelve, was never open at all on the Sabbath. Fred had to pass it on his way home, and as the window screens were down he got a sight of the clock. The hands pointed at ten minutes of twelve.

"It's later than I thought," he said. "Sam is in bed and asleep, but I'll have to arouse him and get him to take me around to Constable Smith's house, for I have only a general idea where it is, and the chances are I'd lose a lot of time trying to find it myself."

He walked fast and in due time reached the Fields cottage and let himself in at the front door with his latchkey. Sam's room was next to his own. The door was never locked, so Fred entered without ceremony. Sam was snoring away in deep slumber. Fred seized him by the shoulder and shook him into wakefulness.

"Hello! What's the matter?" he asked sleepily.

"Get up and dress yourself."

"What for? The house ain't afire, is it?"

"No; I want you to take me to the constable's house, and I want to get there as soon as possible."

"What do you want to go there for? What's happened? What time is it, anyway?"

"The three robbers are hiding in the church ruin, and I want to notify Constable Smith of the fact. I'm afraid it won't do much good, though, for they know that their retreat has been piped off and the chances are they've skipped out by this time. However, it's my duty to tell the constable what I know, and let him do the rest."

"How did you learn they are still in the neighborhood?" asked Sam, as he dressed himself.

"You know I went out to Farmer Eaton's this afternoon."

"Yes."

"I was on my way home, between ten and eleven, when I saw Steve Willett coming toward me with a basket on his arm. I wondered what brought him out there at that hour, and watched him. Where do you suppose he went?"

"I couldn't guess."

"Into the church ruin."

"Get out!" exclaimed Sam incredulously.

"He did, as sure as you live. I was sure I had spotted the joker who was at the bottom of the ghostly phenomena of the bell tower. I had an idea from the fact that he had a basket with him he was up to some new spook trick, so after he went in I followed him."

"Well?" said Sam, with a look of interest.

Fred then told him all that followed his third visit to the bell tower, only this time he did not go any higher than two-thirds of the way up the ladder, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. The story was not finished until they were well on their way to Constable Smith's house, and it was frequently interrupted by Sam, who was greatly astonished to hear that Steve Willett and his father were aiding and abetting the robbers to the extent at least of supplying them with food and information.

"This will put the Willetts in a nice hole," said Sam. "They'll be arrested, of course."

"I'm not going to tell the constable about their connection with the rascals."

"Why not?"

"What good would it do? My story can't be corroborated. Steve would swear that I was a liar. He'd assert that he wasn't out of the house last night, and his father and mother would back him up. The justice would have to let him go. As for Willett himself, there is nothing against him except what I heard Steve say, and that wouldn't count. If I could meet the detective who is on the job I'd tell him what I know and suggest that Steve be watched, for he's pretty certain to go to the ruins after that box before long. As for the rascals, I don't believe they'll consider it safe to remain in the neighborhood now. From their talk I judged their intentions were to try and rob the bank, but we may consider that off. If I hadn't run against that rascal in the dark, they wouldn't have known that an intruder had been in the tower listening to them, and then the constable would have had them dead to rights."

When they reached Constable Smith's house they rang the bell and pounded on the door. A second-story window was raised and the officer stuck out his head and asked who was there and what was wanted.

"I've got news for you," said Fred.

"What is it?"

"I've found out that the three robbers are at the old bell tower, or were an hour ago."

"You're the new clerk at the novelty works, aren't you?" said Smith.

"Yes. My name is Fred Osgood."

"You sent me to the ruins after those men when the mail pouches were stolen."

"I did."

"We found no signs of them."

"It is clear to me they've been hiding there ever since."

"How do you know they have? The detective from Golding was there right after the burglary and found no trace of them at the place."

"I can't help that. I can swear they were up in the old bell tower an hour ago."

"How do you know that? Were you there an hour ago?"

"I was."

"What were you doing there at that hour?" asked the constable suspiciously.

"I had a good reason for going in, but the reason had nothing to do with the robbers. I didn't even suspect they were there."

"You went in the church, then, and ascended to the tower, eh?"

"I got as far as halfway up the ladder. Then I heard men's voices. I stopped and listened to what they were saying. Their talk convinced me that they were the fellows who got away with the mail bags, and who afterward committed the burglary."

"Did you see the men?"

"I did not."

"It doesn't strike me as reasonable for them to be lying around this neighborhood after their last job. The most natural thing in the world for them to do would be to get away with their swag as soon as they could. They couldn't very well sell it in any of the towns in this county, so the thing they would do would be to go to Boston. The Boston authorities have been notified to look out for them, and have been furnished with a description of the stolen articles. I dare say you mean all right, young man, but you're not an officer like myself. I guess you heard a couple of tramps talking in the bell tower and you got the idea they were the robbers. You'd better go home and go to bed. I'm not going on any wild-goose chase to-night."

"All right, Mr. Smith. I've done my duty, so the matter is up to you. I thought you'd be glad to get my information. I don't believe you'd catch them anyway if you went to the church to-night. Good night!" said Fred. "Come on, Sam." And the boys walked away.

"If those robbers had only Constable Smith to deal with, they'd have a picnic," said Fred, as he and Sam turned the corner.

"Bet your boots! Smith is only a big bluff. He talks big, but he's nothing but a bag of wind. He ought to be bounced out of his job," said Sam.

Fifteen minutes later the boys reached home and went directly to bed.

CHAPTER XI.—Fred and Sam Visit the Ruins.

Next morning Fred told the superintendent about his experience of the night before at the church ruin. That gentleman believed his story and was surprised to hear that Willett and his son were in league to some extent with the robbers. He agreed with his new clerk that it would be useless to have Steve arrested, but he determined to have the tavernkeeper's son watched. He was a bit angry because the constable had refused to make use of Fred's information, and he put on his hat and went around to see him about it. Fred told his story to Cashier Black.

and said he was convinced that most of his property was hidden at the church ruin.

"The men have probably left the place, and I'll wager Steve Willett has orders to go after the box when he thinks it safe to do so."

"Then he must be watched," said the cashier.

"The superintendent is going to attend to that. I think you stand a good chance now of recovering your property."

"If I do I shall give you credit for it, and I'll make it all right with you."

"That's all right, Mr. Black. I don't consider that I'm entitled to any special recognition. I shall be very glad if I should prove a factor in helping you get your things back."

That day a force of police from Golding searched the ruins thoroughly from the ground floor to the bell tower. They found evidences that the bell tower had been occupied by somebody, but they discovered no clue to the robbers. A stranger who said he came from a distant town and was expecting to get work at the novelty works made his appearance at the tavern that afternoon and hung around, talking to Willett and the habitués till dark. Without appearing to do so, he kept his eye on Steve's movements, but that lad didn't leave the place all day. He looked uneasy and kept himself in the background most of the time.

Several Golding officers, in disguise, were out trying to locate the robbers, but they failed to accomplish anything. So the week passed and Sunday came around again. Right after breakfast Fred and Sam started for the church ruins. The recent events connected with the tower had helped to persuade Sam that the old bell tower might not be haunted after all. He did not lose any of his faith in ghosts, but he began to doubt the existence of the old sexton's spook. Fred's arguments so far impressed him that he felt no backwardness about going with his new friend to the ruins and tower in the daytime. At any rate, he felt tolerably brave in Fred's company.

For the first time Fred inspected the church proper. The solid walls showed evidences of age and wear and tear. The pews the edifice had once contained had been sold to another church, and so the main floor was perfectly bare, but much littered with rubbish and the debris from the broken roof. The rain and snow where it had come in had rotted the boards, and the boys found many holes in the flooring. They looked the place well over to see if they could discover the presumed hiding place of the box of plunder, but they found no sign of it, nor any spot that offered a likely place for its concealment. They also carefully examined the ground all around both sides and rear of the ruins with the same result. Then they went up to the old bell tower. This was Sam's first visit to it, though he had lived in Singleton all his life.

He followed Fred up the ladder with some awe, for he could not wholly divest his mind of the impression he had long entertained that it was haunted. He gazed at the bell that had so often within the last six months sounded the three solemn taps.

"Take hold of it, and you'll see that it's as stiff as if nailed in place," said Fred.

Sam did so and found that all his strength was not sufficient to move it.

"It's the clapper that moves independently of

the bell. Anybody could ring by swinging it against the bell, or by pulling it with a string or a wire," said Fred.

"But you saw it move without the agency of any of those things," said Sam.

"I know I did, but human hands did it in some way. The joker was concealed somewhere, but his whereabouts were a mystery to me, and are yet. The alcove appears to be the most likely place, yet I examined it by match light and it was quite empty, just as it is now. We'll step in there and tap the walls to see if they're solid."

The boys did so, but their investigations amounted to nothing. Stopping for a while, they sat on the thick ledge of the window overlooking the road and then Fred told Sam the story of the old Tory's money box, which report at one time, according to Joshua Warren's story, said he had concealed in that tower.

"Do you think he hid it here?" asked Sam.

"It is quite possible that he did when he found that he had no time to take it away with him," answered Fred.

"Do you think he came back and got it afterward?"

"I think he would have made a big effort to do so, wouldn't you, under the same circumstances?"

"Bet your life I would."

"According to the story, there is no record that he came back after it. If he really hid it here and did not recover it, somebody else doubtless found it and made use of the money."

"I guess so. It wouldn't remain here to this day."

"I wouldn't mind finding such a fortune," said Fred.

"I'd like to find it myself."

"A box full of English sovereigns would be a fine prize."

"It would make a fellow rich. A thousand sovereigns would be worth nearly \$5,000."

"The old Tory was worth a great deal more than \$5,000. I should say that \$50,000 was nearer the mark."

"That's a lot of money. You could start a bank with it."

After a thorough investigation of the old bell tower Fred was compelled to admit that the phenomena he had witnessed there on the night of the party was as much of a mystery as ever, though he was not shaken in his opinion that human agency was at the bottom of it. They were going down the ladder when the bell gave out a light tap. Sam was so scared that he lost his grip on the ladder and slid to the foot of it in a heap. Fred stopped and looked at the bell. The clapper was hanging straight down and showed no signs of having moved. He watched it a while, but nothing more happened.

"I'd give something to get on to the secret," he muttered.

He looked at the bell, the walls, the ceiling, and the alcove, but no solution of the mystery presented itself to his mind.

"I hate to let this thing stump me," he thought.

But it did stump him, and he had to admit it.

"What made the bell ring?" asked Sam from below.

"I haven't been able to make out. If it wasn't that we'd be late for our dinner and keep you

mother waiting for us, I'd look the place over again."

"Let it go, we can come back again," said Sam, who was eager to get away.

"I'm not going to wait now," and Fred came down.

Then they left the ruins and started for home, where they arrived just in time to sit down to the dinner table. Next day Fred told the cashier that he and Sam had been all over the ruins looking for a hiding place where the robbers might have concealed the box of plunder, but their search had been in vain.

"Steve Willett hasn't made any attempt to visit the old church again," said Mr. Black. "The detective who is hanging about the tavern had so reported."

"Maybe Sam and his father suspect him and consider it prudent to be cautious. The detective had better hide in the ruins for a change and see if anything happens."

The cashier had a talk with the superintendent, and the result was the sleuth's plan of operations was changed. The whole of the following week passed; however, and Steve never went near the old church. Clearly, he and his father were foxy birds, or the robbers had made a change in their original plans. During that week Farmer Thompson reported that his milk house had been twice broken into and each time a pan of the milk taken. He also missed eggs and suspected that two or three of his hens had gone the same way. He had set a watch without result. Another farmer farther along the road reported a similar loss in eggs and poultry.

Finally Farmer White rushed into the village and reported that his house had been entered and his pantry cleaned out, together with everything of value on the ground floor that could be easily carried away. Constable Smith went to White's house to make an investigation, after which he and one of his deputies started to hunt for the thief or thieves.

"I'll bet those three rascals are still in the neighborhood," said Fred to Sam, after he heard of the robbery of White's house.

"Looks like it," nodded Sam. "The village selectmen ought to hire a couple of city detectives to get those fellows. Constable Smith won't catch them in a hundred years."

"If something isn't done, those chaps will clean up the neighborhood by degrees," said Fred. "They may be back at the church ruin again, or they may have found a new hiding place."

Next day was Sunday and Fred went to call on Jessie Eaton again. At the supper table he told Joshua Warren that he and his friend Sam had paid a visit to the church ruin and the bell tower on the previous Sunday morning. He explained the double object of their visit, and admitted that their investigations had failed in both cases.

"Did you look to see where the old Tory might have hidden his box of gold?" said the old man, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"We didn't give much attention to that," said Fred, "for it isn't likely that gold is there now. I daresay if the Tory hid it there somebody found it not long afterward, supposing, of course, that Ezekiel Dobbs didn't return on the sly and get it away himself, which was the most likely thing he would do. No man is going to sacrifice a fortune if he can help it."

"It was said that he never was seen or heard of after leaving this neighborhood," said the old man.

"Then it's a wonder his ghost and not the old sexton's would have had the reputation of haunting the old bell tower. There would have been something consistent in that," laughed Fred.

"If spirits are allowed to return to earth, I guess his would have the call over the sexton as far as the tower is concerned," said Joshua Warren.

"Then why should the people jump at the conclusion that the alleged ghost was the old sexton's? Those who claim to have seen the spook had no means of establishing his identity."

"No. They took it for granted that it was the sexton because he used to ring the bell at the church."

"Oh, I see. It was a matter of deduction with them. I have almost cured Sam Fields of his ghostly fancies. The fact that Steve Willett went there on several occasions at night helped wean him, for his pride won't let him allow Willett to have anything on him."

After supper Fred had Jessie mostly to himself, as the old man was not in a particularly talkative humor that evening, and to the girl's satisfaction he went early to bed. Fred and Jessie got on so well together that he promised to call again on the following Sunday, and she said she would look for him. He left the farm at half-past ten and started home along the road.

CHAPTER XII.—Fred's Curious Dream.

Fred went to sleep that night thinking about Jessie Eaton, but he had a curious dream that was not at all concerned with the girl. He thought he visited the old bell tower to make another investigation into the mystery of the bell which rang in some way not apparent to the observer. It was night and he had a lantern with him. The old tower looked the same as usual when he got there, and his investigations began with the alcove. As he flashed the lantern into it his back was toward the bell. Suddenly he heard a sigh behind him. The sound might easily have been made by the night wind circulating through the tower, but the boy experienced that peculiar feeling which comes over one when he feels conscious that he is not alone.

Fred wheeled around at once and was amazed to see the figure of an old white-haired man, with a smoothly shaven face, standing directly under the bell. He was dressed in a long plum-colored coat, with wide pocket flaps that reached to his knees, wide open in front, revealing a long, velvet waistcoat underneath; then a pair of velvet knee breeches fastened at the knee by three silver buttons; long, drab stockings, and a pair of shoes with wide silver buckles.

His head was covered with a three-cornered hat. His attire and appearance was of the Revolutionary War period, and though Fred was living in the early part of the twentieth century, one hundred and twenty-five years later, he did not seem to notice anything extraordinary in the old man. The figure did not present the ghastly features of one who had departed this life and

had come forth from a grave he could not rest easy in for some cause. On the contrary, he looked as natural as life with his dark eyes fixed on the boy.

Something told Fred that this odd personage was Ezekiel Dobbs, the Tory, and yet with that impression fully developed in his mind, he regarded the old man about the same as he would have looked upon his friend Sam had he appeared in the old bell tower at that moment instead of the present figure. The old man stood under the bell, apparently lost in thought, his figure thrown into partial relief by the dim light of a horn lantern he carried in one hand. Suddenly he gave a start and assumed a listening attitude. He put down the lantern and glided to the window overlooking the road. He stood a while looking up and down the road.

Apparently reassured, he left the window, picked up the lantern and moved toward the alcove. Stepping into it, he bent down and lifted a trap door. The flash of the old-fashioned lantern revealed a narrow flight of steps going downward into the darkness. The old man began to descend, and though he took no notice of the boy's presence, Fred seemed to understand that he was expected to follow. He did so, and noticed that the stairs wound around and around in a very narrow space, not unlike the interior of a brick chimney.

Down the steps he followed the flashing of the light. The old man held the lantern up as he moved forward in what looked like a great arched vault built of stone. Smaller vaults led off the main one, and into one of these the figure with the lantern passed and Fred followed, as if it was the most natural thing in the world for him to do. The old man glided straight over to a certain corner, knelt down and paused in the act of listening. Placing the lantern on the floor, the figure drew a piece of steel from his pocket; inserted the pointed sharp end of it in a long crack and pried up one side of a thin slab the other side of which worked on hinges. In the hole beneath lay an oblong cedarwood box, with a flat top, and corners protected by scroll-shaped brass pieces. The old man turned the key in the brass lock and opened the chest.

From his large pockets, which Fred now observed to be bulging, he drew forth a number of bags of money, which he emptied into the chest, shut down the cover and relocked it. Then he returned the slab to its original position, arose, picked up the lantern and left the vault. The next thing Fred knew was when he opened his eyes and found it was morning. The sun was shining in at the window, and somebody was pounding on his door. That somebody proved to be Sam, who entered directly afterward.

"Get up, it's seven o'clock and breakfast is on the table," he said. "You must have stayed out late again last night, for you don't usually oversleep yourself. Now that you have a girl on the string, like myself, you'll soon be making a steady thing of walking out to the Eaton farm. If I were you, I'd hire an automobile and go there in style," grinned Sam. "It's eight miles there and back. I'd have to think a lot of a girl to take all that trouble for her sake. If my dame didn't live in the village she wouldn't see me oftener than once a month."

Fred got up and began to dress in an abstract-

ed way. His dream, which had been intensely real, was still strong upon him. He made no reply to Sam, which his friend thought rather odd.

"What's the matter with you? Did you propose last night and get the turn-down?" he chuckled.

"What are you talking about?" asked Fred, looking at him.

"What am I talking about? That's pretty good. You heard what I said, didn't you?"

"No."

"Anything the matter with your ears this morning?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then how is it that you didn't hear what I said?"

"I wasn't paying attention to you."

"Thinking of Jessie Eaton, eh?"

"No."

"What else were you thinking about? I should think she was the most interesting subject to take your attention. She's a mighty nice little girl, and her folks are considered rich for farmers. At any rate, they've the finest farm in the county. It's been in the Warren family for a hundred years; that was Mrs. Eaton's name before she was married. Her father gave her the farm as a wedding present."

"So I heard."

"Well, what were you thinking about when I came in and wasted my eloquence on your inattentive ears?"

"I was thinking of a dream I had last night."

"A dream, eh? Dreamed you were being married to Jessie maybe; but I hope not, for they say that's very bad luck. Dream of a wedding and you'll hear of a funeral, my mother says. Dream that you're going to be married yourself, and you are liable to ride in the hearse yourself, though that doesn't always happen, for there are exceptions to all things."

"Miss Jessie had nothing to do with my dream."

"I breathe again," grinned Sam. "Talking of funerals, you know the editor of the Standard?"

"Yes, I know who he is."

"His uncle died last year and left him all his money, which wasn't a fortune, on condition that he buy a stone in his memory. His uncle meant a headstone, of course, but he neglected to specify it in the will in those words."

"Didn't he buy a stone, then?"

"Sure he did. He went to Golding and bought the biggest diamond he could find there."

Sam dodged as if he expected Fred was going to throw his hair brush at him.

"You seem to be funny this morning, Sam."

"It isn't my fault. My father made his living writing jokes for the papers, and he inoculated me with his sense of humor. Then I had an uncle who was a comedian on the stage. I've heard him say that it was a fine business. He said he never wanted for food while he was on the road. He got all he wanted thrown at him by the audience. But we're drifting from the subject, as the doctor said when a corpse he wanted to experiment on was thrown overboard. What did you dream about?"

"The old bell tower."

"You don't say!" said Sam, with a look of interest. "What happened in your dream?"

"Boys, will you come to breakfast?" shouted Mrs. Fields from the foot of the stairs at that moment.

"I'll tell you later, Sam. We have no time now," said Fred.

They hurried down to the little dining room and were soon busy filling up on the customary bill-of-fare.

CHAPTER XIII.—A Realization.

The novelty works was only a short distance from the cottage, so Fred had no chance to tell his dream to Sam until the noon whistle sounded, and they started for dinner together, then he began. They reached the house by the time Fred got as far as the point where he saw the old Tory open the trapdoor in the alcove and begin to descend. Sam was full of wonder at his recital and constantly interrupted him with some remark.

"Why, we looked all over the alcove and we didn't see any trapdoor there," he said.

"We didn't look at the floor. At any rate, I didn't, for the idea of a trapdoor being there never suggested itself to me. But that reminds me that I found an old musty chart or diagram of the bell tower the first time I went up there. I haven't looked at it since, but I will do so now and see if there is a trapdoor marked in the alcove section. Doesn't it strike you that an alcove is a strange thing to have in a bell tower? That of itself indicates something out of the usual."

Fred looked up the diagram and examined it. In the alcove space there were markings that might be taken to stand for a trapdoor.

"I'm ready to go to the tower with you to-night after supper and see if there is a trapdoor in the alcove," said Sam, as they sat down to the table.

"Will you? I'm glad to see that you're getting over your ghostly nonsense. If things should pan out according to my dream, going with me may prove the greatest thing that ever happened to you."

"How?"

"Because I believe that the old Tory's money is down in one of those vaults."

"Did you dream it was?"

"I'll go on with my dream and you can judge for yourself."

Fred told him the rest of his dream.

"Gosh! You saw the Tory put his money in that box under the flag slab?"

"He put as much into it as he could carry in his pocket. I saw twice as much already in the box. He had evidently made several trips to the vault. He had to take the box down first, empty, and that must have been quite a job."

"Supposing, of course, your dream proves to be true."

"Of course. If we don't find a trapdoor then my dream will have been merely a strange, unaccountable freak of my brain. But this old plan shows one."

"It strikes me that it will turn out to be true. Lots of dreams of that kind have before now. Every once in a while you read about a remarkable one in the newspapers."

"You can't put any dependence in those newspaper stories."

"I guess some of them are founded on fact. Say, it would be great if we found the way into the vaults as you dreamed, and discovered that box of money, wouldn't it?"

"It certainly would. The gold would be mine by right of discovery, but I'd see that you got a handsome rake-off to pay you for going with me and helping me get the money out of the vault."

"You'd be rich. How much did there seem to be in the box?"

"The last bag the Tory put in filled the box. There looked to be all of fifty or sixty thousand dollars there."

"You wouldn't need to work any more for the rest of your life."

"I wouldn't loaf around doing nothing if I found a million. However, we won't count our chickens until they are hatched, then we won't feel so bad if things don't turn out the way we hope they will. Have you got through? If you have we'll walk back to work."

"What's your hurry? We've got lots of time."

There is little doubt that Fred and Sam thought more than once that afternoon about the possible existence of vaults under the church tower. It was certain that the oldest inhabitant of the neighborhood had no knowledge that any vaults existed there. For that reason Fred felt rather doubtful about his dream turning out true. The boys walked home together, and while waiting for supper to be put on the table they made preparations for the night's expedition.

Sam borrowed a lantern from the man next door, while Fred got a wide chisel out of the carpenter box in the outhouse. They started out right after supper, and stopped at the post office, as Fred wanted to borrow Ben's revolver for protection in case of an emergency.

"Where are you two going?" Ben asked.

"To the old bell tower," said Sam.

"To look for those robbers?" grinned Ben.

"Hardly," said Fred. "I guess they've skipped, for nothing has been heard from them since the robbery of Farmer White's and the appearance of the two Boston detectives on the scene."

"They've probably got away with all their plunder."

"Maybe they have and maybe they haven't. They had a boxful they were going to send away by express. They probably had to leave that behind. I dare say that Steve Willett knows where it's hidden, and some time, when he thinks the coast is clear, he'll get it and send it to the rascals. If he's only caught in the act, he'll get what's coming to him."

"Bet your life he will!" nodded Ben.

Fred and Sam then said good night and started for the old bell tower. The road was silent as they walked along, the moonlight painting their moving shadows before them. They met no one and finally reached their destination. The tower looked quiet and solemn beside the road. Sam felt a few lingering qualms as they walked in and stopped to light the lantern, but his curiosity to see what came out of Fred's dream overcame all other considerations.

Up the stairs and then up the ladder they went, the lantern light throwing weird shadows around them. When they emerged into the bell tower Fred instinctively looked at the bell as if

half expecting to see the figure of the old Tory standing under it, clad in Eighteenth Century attire. They lost no time in getting down to business. Fred stepped into the alcove and, kneeling down, examined the floor carefully at the point indicated in the old plan. The flooring was built of narrow oak boards that fitted snugly together. He looked for the outline of a trap, but there was none apparent.

"I'm afraid the jig is up at the start," he said. "There's no trap here, Sam."

"No? That's hard luck. I was ready to bet there was on the strength of your old plan and dream," said Sam.

"Come in and take a look. This nook is large enough to hold four like us."

Sam stepped in and looked at the floor.

"Say, this is made of different wood to the floor of the rest of the tower. Doesn't that strike you as odd?"

Fred flashed the light outside the alcove and saw that the rest of the tower was floored with wide boards.

"The carpenter who put in the flooring doubtless had orders to make the alcove different from the rest of the place, otherwise it would be so."

"Maybe the whole floor is a trap, running flush with the sides," said Sam. "In that case you wouldn't be apt to notice it."

"That couldn't be, for the old Tory stood right here, in my dream, stooped down and lifted the trap here."

Fred suited his actions to his words, and then it was he noticed a crack in the boards running from wall to wall.

"Get outside, Sam," he said excitedly.

Sam did so. Fred pulled the chisel from his pocket, inserted it in the crack and pressed on it. The floor beyond him moved, then rose enough for the boy to get his fingers under the edge. He pulled it up and flashed the lantern down into the hole. There he saw the winding stone steps of his dream.

CHAPTER XIV.—Finding a Fortune.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Sam, delighted beyond measure.

To Fred the realization of his hopes came like a shock to him. It took no small amount of courage, too, to think of venturing down into those dark depths. But Fred was game for anything, particularly when it seemed as if fate was drawing him to a fortune.

"Well, Sam, are you going to follow me down?" he said.

"Sure I am. You wouldn't catch me staying here alone in the dark," said Sam.

"Come on, then, and mind your steps."

Fred started down and Sam followed close behind him. The descent seemed endless. It came to an end at last, however, in a large vault.

"Gosh, what wonderful things dreams are sometimes!" said Sam. "Just think of dreaming about a place you'd never heard of! But even without the dream I guess you would have made this investigation after you examined the old plan. The dream is only a fancy, but the plan is something substantial to go by."

"We won't argue the matter, Sam, for fear it might make you nervous."

"Gosh! I'm as brave as a fighting-cock," he said, as he followed Fred into the smaller vault. "Oh, my, what's that?" he suddenly gasped.

The light from the lantern had flashed upon a grinning skull. Even Fred was startled for the moment, and stopped short. He raised the lantern above his head. Its rays fell upon a skeleton, sitting against the wall near the corner. A few shreds of what must originally have been cloth clung to the shoulder bones. Lying in the dust of the vanished apparel on the floor were a number of silver buttons, as well as a pair of silver buckles, but they were discolored and oxidized by the atmosphere of the place. Fred needed no other evidence to tell him that he was looking upon all that was mortal of Ezekiel Dobbs, the Tory.

He easily deduced from the gruesome sight that the old man had come after his gold, or perhaps had never left it, and was taken maybe with an apoplectic fit, due to excitement and over-anxiety, and expired beside his treasure. Dobbs was known to have disappeared when the neighborhood got too hot for him, and he was never seen or heard of again. Had the existence of the secret stairway and the vaults been known his body would have been found, even if his money eluded the searchers, and his fate would not in that case have been involved in obscurity. Fred stepped forward, but Sam held back, deterred by the grisly-looking skeleton, which had no more power to hurt him than a fly. Quite unmindful of the bony object, Fred knelt close to it, inserted the chisel in the crack in the floor, and raised the slab of thin stone. In the hole lay a box. The key stood in the lock. With some difficulty the boy turned it and threw up the cover. The box was stuffed with money.

"Look, Sam! Here is the Tory's gold—my fortune and a rake-off for you."

The word "rake-off" drew Sam forward. He would brave even the skeleton to secure some money. We will not dwell on Fred's exultation. He saw a golden future before him and he called on Sam to help him get the box out of the hole. It was too heavy to lift, so they began lightening it of some of its contents.

While thus engaged, Fred's foot accidentally came in contact with the skeleton. It instantly crumbled into dust with the exception of the head, which fell with a rattle that scared a year's growth out of Sam.

"Brace up! What's the matter with you?" said Fred. "The box is light enough now. Give me a hand with it."

Between them they landed it on the floor. Fred picked up the skull and held it out in one hand.

"What in thunder are you doing?" protested Sam, moving away.

Removing his hat, Fred addressed the skull.

"Thanks, Ezekiel Dobbs, for guiding me to your treasure. Although you lost it yourself, at least you had the satisfaction of keeping it out of the hands of those who thought to tear it from you. I will now give you a Christian burial in the hole where your money-box reposed so long. Good-by, Ezekiel, until we meet on the Day of Judgment."

Fred placed the skull in the hole. He picked

up the buttons and the buckles to keep as curiosities. With the side of the chisel he scraped all the dust he conveniently could into the hole and shut down the slab. It was a slow and tedious job getting the box up to the bell tower. Then they had to go down twice after the other money. When all was up the trap was replaced.

"Now we've got to see about getting this money to the house," said Fred.

At that moment a sudden noise came from the opening. Fred flashed the lantern in that direction.

"Oh, gracious!" gasped Sam, sinking down in fright when he saw what appeared to be three gigantic owls about to spring on them. Fred saw that the unexpected intruders were men with imitation owls' heads over their own, as a disguise. In the hand of the leader flashed a revolver.

"Throw up your hands, kids!" he cried. "We'll take charge of that money for you, though where you found it in this place gets our goats."

Like a flash Fred realized that he and Sam were face to face with the three robbers who had eluded the constables and the detectives. He threw up one of his hands, but he managed to pull his revolver with the other, and he fired quickly at the rascal. The fellow uttered a cry, staggered back and dropped his revolver.

"Get that gun, Sam, and cover one of those bogus owls!" cried Fred.

Sam, who recovered from his fright on seeing they had real men to deal with, grabbed the weapon, and the boys covered the two rascals before they could get out their own guns.

"What are we going to do with them?" asked Sam.

"Climb in, both of you, and be lively about it, or we'll shoot, for we can't afford to take any chances with you."

At that moment steps were heard in the room below, and two men came up the ladder.

"What's going on here?" asked the foremost.

Fred recognized them as the two city detectives.

"You've come in the nick of time," he said. "We have caught the three robbers for you. What lucky chance brought you here at this moment?"

"We were passing this place in our rig and heard the shot."

The robbers were handcuffed and taken to the Golding jail by the officers. After they had departed, Sam hurried to the village and in three-quarters of an hour returned with Ben and his wagon. On the way he told Ben all about the finding of the gold in the vault. The postmaster's boy couldn't help feeling astonished.

"How much money is there in the box?" he asked.

"I couldn't tell you. We haven't counted it yet," replied Sam.

Ben opened his eyes very wide when he was shown the contents of the box. The box was carried down to the wagon, and then the rest of the money followed. All were taken to the Fields cottage and there the three boys gathered about the table in Fred's home and counted the golden sovereigns. There proved to be 12,000 of them

altogether. Estimating each gold coin at an exchange value of \$4.84, he calculated that the whole was worth about \$60,000. When he turned it in at the Golding National Bank in exchange for American money, he received \$60,500. He placed \$50,000 with the bank on special deposit, gave Sam \$5,000 for his services, Ben \$500 for his, and bought a \$5,000 interest in the novelty company.

The three robbers were eventually tried and convicted of their crimes. Steve Willett appeared at Cashier Black's house one evening with the bulk of his stolen property in the box, asserting that he had found it in the old ruins and claiming the reward of \$200 offered. After the cashier told him a few things, he was glad to accept \$25 and think himself lucky. To Ben he confessed that he was the person who had worked the ghost business for the past six months, and explained that he rang the bell by means of a piece of wire with a crooked end which he could easily attach or detach in a moment's time. He kept himself concealed in the space at the top of the alcove. This place he showed to the three robbers, who made use of it to keep under cover.

Fred Osgood's discovery of the old Tory's gold made him somewhat famous in the county. He continued to visit Jessie Eaton regularly, but he didn't walk to the farm any more, but hired a rig, for he could well afford it. With an interest in the novelty works and \$50,000 in bank, he was looked upon as a person of some consequence. Eventually he bought out the president's shares and was himself elected president.

Two years after the events narrated in this story he married Jessie and built a pretty home in the village for his father and mother, who came there to live. Thus Fred's coming to work in the village of Silverton, which his parents had objected to, resulted in his finding a fortune.

Next week's issue will contain "ON THE STOCK MARKET; or, THE LUCKY VENTURES OF A WALL STREET MESSENGER BOY."

FOUND A WILD MAN.

Recently, while the chief of police was hunting in a wood near Szatmar-Nemeti, Austria, he discovered a cave, and, after proceeding some way in comparative darkness, almost stumbled over a man absolutely covered with hair. There was something so unnatural, so weird and other-world-like about the man that a feeling akin to fear seized the police officer. The man looked for all the world like a beast. Immediately the gendarmes were summoned, and they proceeded to drag the man by force into the daylight. He fought like a tiger, scratching and biting the gendarmes dangerously. At last he was conveyed, amidst a scene of the utmost confusion, to the hospital. Here it was discovered that his name was John Labancz, and that he had lived for twenty-seven years in the cave and fed upon plants. The discovery awakened considerable fear among the superstitious country folk.

CURRENT NEWS

A LONG SPAN.

A five-thousand-foot span, so far as is known the longest span in the world, is on the Knoxville Power Company's transmission line. The horizontal distance between supports is 5,010 feet. The difference in elevation is 208.5 feet. The conductors are 500,000 circular mill steel-cored aluminum cables which are under a tension of 19,000 to 20,000 pounds at 80 degrees F. Operation is at 150,000 volts.

HE IS A HUSTLER.

Against the record of the Iowa man who husked 213 bushels of corn in nine hours we wish to submit that of a K. S. N. student, Emmons-ville, Kan. This student carries seventeen hours of school work, works from three to ten hours daily for expenses, has three to five dates a week, plays in the band and orchestra, plays basket ball, is President of his class, goes to church on Sunday, and keeps his health.

POLICE BALKED BY GIANTESS.

Malinda Ogden, weight 360 pounds, scored a clean bout over Lieutenant Archie Holt, amateur wrestling star of the Richmond, Va., police force, when the officer tried to arrest her single-handed for alleged traffic in drugs.

A hurry call brought him reinforcements, and the prisoner was walked to the city jail, only to create further embarrassment. She wouldn't fit the cell doors, so she sat outside until released on bail.

BOY TRAPPED IN COAL CAR.

Jumping on the top of a coal car just as the unloading trap was sprung almost cost Joseph Pope of Plainfield his life, but as it was he only lost his trousers.

Joseph is 13. Seeing a coal car in the yards of Van Zandt & Voorhees, coal dealers of Plainfield, he jumped on the coal. Just then the coal trap was opened and he gradually sank to his armpits.

His cries brought firemen, who after they had vainly shoveled to release Joseph, decided to pull him feet foremost through the bottom. This they did and Joseph emerged minus his trousers but plus a thick coating of coal dust.

GIVES \$348,000,000,000 AS TOTAL COST OF WAR.

The total cost of the World War was declared to be more than \$348,000,000,000 by Dr. Richard P. Strong, Professor of Tropical Medicine at the Harvard Medical School, in a lecture at Johns Hopkins University.

This total, Dr. Strong said, included estimates of the direct costs of the war, amounting to \$150,000,000,000, the indirect costs aggregating \$84,000,000,000 and the cost of lives lost estimated at \$78,000,000,000.

The potential loss of life due to the war was placed at \$13,000,000 by Dr. Strong. The great majority of those who died, he said, were males between the ages of 22 and 41, and as a result of

this the women of France in this age group far outnumber the men. It will take France seventy years to recover the loss in population which that country suffered, Dr. Strong declared.

PILOT-FISH GETS RIDES FOR NOTHING.

Sailors have a saying that where the shark is the pilot-fish will be found. The pilot-fish, or shark-sucker, as it is often called, attaches itself to the surface of other fish by means of a sucking disk. The pilot-fish, however, does no "piloting," though it certainly does suggest to the nautical mind a brisk little pilot-boat bringing a big ship to port. Apparently it merely desires to have a comfortable resting place or at most to get a free ride, like the small boy "hanging behind."

The pilot-fish seems especially fond of attaching itself to sharks and turtles, but when these are not at hand it hangs to any convenient object.

This characteristic has led to the curious custom among some primitive tribes of employing a sucker-fish as a live fishhook (not bait) for catching other fish or turtle. A metal ring is placed around the tail of the sucker-fish so that a line can be fastened to it. The fish is then thrown over and at once darts away to the nearest refuge, which is apt to be a large turtle that has been sighted by the fisherman. When the turtle is reached the sucker-fish attaches its disk against the side of the animal, which is then drawn in by means of the line. As soon as the turtle or shark is drawn above the waterline the sucker-fish drops back into the water and seeks another host.—Illustrated World.

ELECTRIC SHIP MAKES 5,122 MILES WITHOUT STOP.

The first leg of the world circling voyage of the electrically propelled American freighter Eclipse, which sailed hence on December 1, has been completed at Port Said, according to a letter received by the General Electric Company from an engineer, A. Starr of the Locomotive Superheater Company, who went along with the ship's engineering force as an observer. Mr. Starr said the trip of 5,122 miles without a single stop was the most interesting in his long experience.

"The chief engineer of the Eclipse," the letter said, "was very well satisfied with the performance of the entire equipment, and was especially pleased with the simplicity of its operation. The engineer's force is not above average in experience, and therefore when we consider these facts and circumstances, together with the performance of the vessel, it is safe to say that no ship owner would make any mistake by equipping his ship with this type of machinery. The engineers on watch operated the apparatus as easily as a motorman does a trolley car."

The Eclipse was built at the Union Iron Works, San Francisco, in 1918, and last summer she was equipped by the Shipping Board with the turbine electric form of propulsion at the yards of the Vulcan Iron Works, Jersey City, and chartered by the Government to the American Line. She is expected to return to New York in July.

A Lawyer At Nineteen

—OR—

FIGHTING AGAINST A FRAUD

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER V.

The Young Lawyer Is Arrested for Theft and Taken Before a Police Judge.

"The brutes," sympathetically said Lew.

"It was awful," said the girl, who had been talking like a machine, never once looking at Lew, but constantly peering at both sides of the street through which they were now walking, as though in search of somebody.

"What did they take from you, anything?" asked Lew.

Just as he asked the question he and the girl turned a corner which would bring them into Maple street, and at that moment a policeman appeared in sight about a hundred yards away.

Instantly the girl threw her arms around Lew, holding him fast, and then gave utterance to scream after scream.

They had entered quite a busy thoroughfare, and several pedestrians at once came toward them, and instantly the policeman rushed up at top speed.

Lew was a cool-headed young fellow, and one who was not easily set off his mental balance, but the sudden change in the young girl who called herself Grace Carrington was so extreme and so very unexpected that for a moment he was completely bewildered. At the instant he had the idea that the girl had become hysterical and did not know what she was doing, but he began to think that he was the victim of some peculiar business when the policeman came up and the girl said:

"Arrest this man; he has robbed me!"

There was very little excitement in her manner as she released Lew and spoke to the policeman.

The officer caught Lew by the arm with a firm grip.

"You come along with me," he growled.

The young lawyer shot a swift glance at the girl, and surprised a momentary flash of triumph in her eyes that made him think that there was more in his arrest than appeared on the surface of things. To resist arrest was folly, for the bystanders would surely aid the officer, and, for that matter, the latter could easily summon assistance, so Lew submitted quietly.

"All right, officer," he said, "I'll go with you."

"That's the talk," said the policeman. Then he turned to the young girl and told her she would have to come along as well and tell her story to the sergeant at the desk.

"Of course, I'll go with you," she said. "I'll try to put this robber where he belongs. There's

been too much of this robbing of women in the streets of this town lately."

Lew looked keenly at her as he walked at the side of the officer, his arm held in a firm grip. There was evidently something very deep behind all this, and he could have given a great deal to have been able to fathom it. He was on the point of questioning the girl, when it occurred to him that the better way would be to let her go ahead with the matter and thus afford him a chance to see just what there was in it.

Therefore he maintained silence and walked into the police station with the officer and his accuser, and up to the desk. There the officer who had made the arrest told his story.

Then Grace Carrington gave her name and address and said that as she was walking through the street in which the arrest had been made the prisoner came up to her and asked her to direct him to another part of the town, standing very close to her while he asked the question, and then, before she could reply, he had snatched a diamond brooch from the front of her dress and turned to make his escape, but that something in his manner had made her suspicious of his intentions in spite of his respectable appearance, and that she had at once thrown her arms around him and held him fast and called for help as loudly as possible.

"You're a plucky young woman," admiringly said the sergeant, "and if there were more like you these fellows would soon be rounded up. Officer, search the prisoner."

The policeman put his hand into the right-hand outer coat pocket of the sack coat Lew wore and brought out what appeared to be a diamond brooch.

The girl uttered a little scream.

"There it is," she said. "Oh, I was so afraid that he had thrown it away or else passed it to a confederate."

The sergeant turned to Lew.

"I guess you're good for a bit in the stone jug," he said. "What's your name?"

The young lawyer found himself in a nasty situation.

He had been less than two years in Rockton, but had become prominent in the city in that time, and was known and admired by a large number of people, and the unpleasant character of the present situation sent cold shivers down his back. He felt assured that he could establish his excellent character by summoning many persons of high standing if driven to that extreme necessity, and behind this feeling of confidence in the ability of his friends to show that the charge was absurd was the desire to know what was at the bottom of it.

He was thinking this all over, when the sergeant repeated his question:

"What's your name?"

"Put it down John Smith," said Lew.

"Oh, put it down John Smith," sneered the sergeant. "Descended from Captain John Smith, I suppose, and your folks were quite thick Powhattan and his daughter, Pocahontas, I pose?"

"John Smith," steadily said Lew.

"Oh, all right," snarled the sergeant. "Take him down-stairs."

(To be continued)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

17-STORY ADDITION FOR HOTEL PLAZA

Announcement was made the other day that work is to begin at once on a 'seventeen-story addition to the Hotel Plaza, on 58th and 59th Streets, New York, for which the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company lent the Plaza Construction Company \$2,500,000.

The main structure, covering the Fifth Avenue block front, will be extended over a plot 285x200. Old brown stone dwellings on the site of the addition were accumulated at varied times in the last few years for the operation, as reported at the time of the sales.

TWO FISH ON ONE HOOK.

Dr. George W. Rhoades of Newark is the only Delawarean on record as having caught two big-mouthed bass in one haul and both on the same hook, and with artificial bait at that. While angling in the Noxontown Dam he made a cast with a made-up minnow and the instant his hook hit the water there was a big strike, and while he was hooking the first fish and playing him into shallow water another huge bass struck and was hooked. The two fish were on an ordinary hand line, and it required much skill and strength to land them, which was done after a hard fight. They weighed within a few ounces of ten pounds.

LOCATE POPULATION CENTRE.

The centre of population as disclosed by the 1920 census is located in the extreme southeast corner of Owen County, Ind., 8.3 miles southeast of the town of Spencer, the Census Bureau announced to-day.

During the last decade the centre of population continued, to move westward, advancing 9.8 miles in that direction and about one-fifth of a mile north from Bloomington, Ind., where it was located by the Census of 1910.

The bureau attributed the westward movement in the last decade principally to the increase of more than 1,000,000 in the population of the State of California."

HOW TO REALIZE WHAT A MILLION IS.

Although we often 'speak' of millions of dollars and millions in population few realize what a million of anything looks like.

An idea of the impressiveness of a million can be gained by looking at the stars visible, yet as a matter of fact there are never more than 8,000 visible to the naked eye at one time.

The simplest way to conceive of a million is to think of it in terms of time. For instance, there have not been a million days since the founding of Rome, long before the birth of Christ. A million days ago would take us back to early in the year 817 B. C.

A million hours are 114 years, 29 days and 4 hours. This was almost as far back as the battle of Trafalgar and was before the invention of the steamboat or the printing machine.

BOY HURLS CAN OF NITRO; TEACHER AND SEVEN DIE.

February 7.—Eight persons are dead and another is probably fatally injured as the result of the explosion of a can of nitro-glycerine at Cross Roads School, two miles west of here shortly after noon the other day. The dead were Emmet Bunyan, school teacher, and some of his students.

The explosion occurred at the noon recess, when one of the boys found the can. Not knowing it contained an explosive, he playfully tossed it to a companion who, in turn, tried to open the can with an axe.

The authorities were told that the boys who were at play had fished the can from a creek running by the school yard. It is believed that the container had floated down from a nitro-glycerine magazine about three quarters of a mile away. It was said that the practice is to empty the cans at the magazine, afterward destroying them, and it is believed that the container which blew up was one that held only a small amount of explosive and had been thrown in the creek.

One wall of the schoolhouse crumbled and Mr. Bunyan and eight boys were hurled about fifty feet in the air.

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A DEED OF EVIL

By John Sherman.

Among the most remarkable of all the multitudinous records of crime in the Rue de Jerusalem, is the case I am about to narrate.

In its tragic incidents it more resembles the pages of a romance than the narrative of facts as they actually occurred.

The place was Paris—the time a little over ten years ago.

Mademoiselle Fantoli was a celebrated singer.

The reputation of her voice had extended over the whole of Europe and whenever she appeared she did not lack hundreds of admirers to go frantic over her glorious beauty of face and figure.

One evening towards the close of the operatic season her own carriage which she had ordered to be at the stage door an hour earlier than usual, was not in waiting.

As she had an appointment at her house, she did not wait for it to arrive, but sending the call-boy for a public hack, entered it, and gave the driver the street and number of her own residence.

Arriving at the house, the driver alighted and opened the door.

His face, however, neither spoke nor made any attempt to alight, until becoming alarmed, the man ventured to place his hand upon her arm, but the next moment drew it back with an exclamation of horror, for it was wet with blood.

Giving the alarm at once, a moment's scrutiny was sufficient to show that the singer was dead.

She had been stabbed to the heart.

But the motive for the crime and the means by which it had been perpetrated were a mystery.

That the first was not robbery was evident, for jewels worth many thousands still flashed upon her throat and wrists, while that the assassin could have entered and left the coach without the driver being aware of it seemed impossible.

Though loud in his protestations of innocence, the driver was nevertheless arrested and submitted to a rigorous examination by the judge d'instruction, and while his replies seemed to confirm his assertions of non-complicity, they also elicited a possible means by which the deed had been accomplished.

In passing through a narrow street a crowd had obliged him to bring his horse to a standstill for a few moments, and it must have been during this time that the assassin had entered the coach, committed the murder, and made his escape.

The expression on the murdered woman's face was more of surprise than horror.

No doubt the intrusion had been so unexpected that before she had time to recover from her first amazement the murderous blow had been struck, and her voice silenced forever.

The affair was a most mysterious one.

No clew had been left, except one, and that so slight it seemed almost impossible for it to lead to the capture of the assassin.

Clutched in the hand of the murdered woman were a few long hairs of a most peculiar shade of gold.

Probably, with a last expiring effort, she had extended her hand, and dragged them from the head of the woman who had killed her.

The fact that it was a woman who had done the deed was proved by the hair, but beyond this nothing, and, even admitting the circumstance of the hair being of a peculiar shade, to find the owner of it among all the heads of hair, real and false, in Paris, seemed an almost impossible undertaking.

After a lapse of a week or more, the police and the detectives gave the case up in despair, and the public mind began to grow weary of the affair and excited about some more recent event.

Only one person still continued to be interested in the case, and determined the mystery should be brought to light.

This was a young man of about twenty-seven or eight, already of considerable celebrity in the detective force, named Martin Cassignet.

Although as yet he had no definite theory, he began to systematically work up the case, beginning from the simplest premises.

As it was evident robbery was not the motive of the crime, there was no other conclusion than that it must be one of the passions, either jealousy or revenge.

Taking the first named as the most probable, again came the question, was it professional or personal?

A thorough inquiry among the employees of the theater proved that none of the actresses had either natural hair or wigs of the color of that found in the murdered woman's hand.

Therefore, if professional jealousy was the motive the crime must have been done by some one she had known or eclipsed during a previous engagement.

This, however, did not seem probable.

Accordingly, for the present discarding the idea of professional, he turned his attention to that of personal jealousy.

Through the facilities known only to the French detective organization, he was not long in gaining a complete list of Mademoiselle Fantoli's admirers.

Those who were unmarried he erased from the list, but of the wives of the rest he at once proceeded to gain personal descriptions.

As is usually the case he went completely through the list until the very last name, when he gained a slight confirmation of his theory.

A young nobleman, with the name and title of the Marquis de Cheveneaux, was her latest admirer, and his wife had hair of a deep rich gold, the identical shade of that found clutched in the dead woman's fingers.

The marquis had been married but a few months.

He was the descendent of one of the oldest noble families in France, while his wife was the only daughter and heiress of a wealthy manufacturer, whose grandfather was a myth.

People were uncharitable enough to say the marquis did not love his wife, and had only married her for her money, but no one could doubt for an instant her love for him.

It was more than a passion—it amounted to an infatuation.

Whatever else may be wanted in the political

economy of France, the detective organization since the time of Vidocq has been perfect.

Through the means of secret agents two days had not elapsed before Monsieur Martin Cassignet was in possession of the following additional particulars.

Madame the marquise had not attended the opera on the evening of the singer's mysterious murder.

She had been indisposed, dismissing her maid about eight o'clock and telling her that her services would not be needed until the following morning.

The marquis was then absent.

He had left the house about four o'clock, informing his wife he had received a telegram from the steward of his estates in Normandy saying his instant presence was required, and he had at once started in answer to the summons.

This was the extent of the information received from the household of the marquis, but from others more was coming.

The person with whom the singer had the appointment at her house was the Marquis de Cheveneaux.

At the time Mademoiselle Fantoli had sent the call-boy of the theater for a hack, closely veiled, had hailed another standing near, and given the driver a napoleon to follow that of the singer.

The man had done so until stopped by the same crowd that had checked the progress of the one they were following, when the lady had alighted, and mingling with the crowd he had lost sight of her.

These facts, even supposing a few links missing, though not conclusive, yet to the mind of the detective were sufficient confirmation of the theory they supported, to make him determine to chance a grand coup, to either confirm or utterly refute his suspicions.

Accordingly, the following day he called at the house of the marquis, and asked to see him.

As he represented himself as the business agent of the owner of a small estate next to one of his country seats, which the nobleman was desirous of purchasing, he was admitted at once.

Then discarding the ruse by which he had gained his entrance, he laid the whole case before the marquis, and in the name of the law demanded to be taken to his wife.

As the nobleman heard the successive points, his face became deadly pale, and it seemed as if he must faint.

He listened to the end, however, and then rising with all the pride of Norman ancestors flushing his face, he rang the bell.

"Tell Madame the Marquise," he said, as the servant answered the summons, "that this—this gentleman and myself desire an audience."

The servant bowed and left the room, in a few moments returning with the answer that Madame was in the blue drawing-room awaiting their pleasure.

Following the servant to the room, the nobleman courteously motioned the detective to precede him, and then following, closed and locked the door.

"Madame," he said, "this gentleman has some business with you."

His voice was so stern and calm, that the lady looked at him in wonder.

The detective advanced a step or two, with his hand in his breast.

"Madame," he said, "I am sorry for what I have to do, but there is no alternative. I am a detective and I arrest you for the murder of Mademoiselle Fantoli."

For a moment the blood flushed her face to the very roots of her hair, and then died, leaving it pallid as marble.

She stood like one turned suddenly to stone, but she did not speak.

"Madame," her husband said, "is what this man says true?"

Her lips moved for a moment, but no sound left them.

Then, in a voice almost inaudible, she answered:

"It is, Heaven help me! I was mad, but, Raymond, I loved you so."

The detective advanced a step to place his hand upon her arm, but her husband stepped between them.

"Fellow," he said, all the pride of his race flashing from his eyes, "this lady is my wife—the Marquis de Cheveneaux. Do you think that I will allow you to take her to prison like a thief of the barriers? When the name of a De Cheveneaux has been sullied, a De Cheveneaux alone can erase the stain."

As he spoke he drew a small, gold-mounted revolver from his pocket.

His wife had been standing in the same frozen, marble-like attitude.

Now the weapon was leveled, and before the detective could arrest his hand, a report broke the silence, and she fell heavily to the ground, a bullet through her heart.

So utterly unexpected had been the action that the detective stood aghast.

Before he could recover himself, the marquis had pressed the muzzle of the weapon against his own forehead, while a sarcastic laugh left his lips.

"When the honor of a De Cheveneaux is sullied he wipes it out in death," he said. "Go, canaille, and report to your master that you have seen how a peer of France can die."

With the last words he again pressed the trigger.

Again a sharp report rang through the apartment.

Then the weapon dropped from his nerveless fingers, and without a moan, he fell lifeless beside the body of his wife, whose jealous revenge had cost her own life and that of the man she loved.

As it always does, her revenge had recoiled upon herself, and though the penalty of human justice had been evaded, Heaven, in its own mysterious way, had avenged the deed of evil.

SWEDISH ENGINEER MAKES MOVIES SPEAK.

After ten years of experimenting the Swedish engineer Sven Bergiense is reported to have produced a speaking moving picture, which recently was exhibited before scientists and other distinguished persons.

Prof. Svente Arrhenius, director of the physico-chemical department of the Nobel Institute says the invention solves a long attempted problem.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

PASSES 83d BIRTHDAY; MARRIED FOR 67 YEARS.

Herman Nohl, of Sterling, Ill., celebrated his ninety-third birthday recently. His wife was 83 last September, and in November they celebrated their sixty-seventh wedding anniversary.

They have nine children, 28 grand-children and 20 great-grand-children living. Both are active and in the best of health.

"TY" COBB GIVEN WINCHESTER GUN.

"Ty" Cobb, Manager of the Detroit Ball Club, and "Chief" Bender, Manager of the New Haven Ball Club, were recently tendered a joint banquet by the sportsmen of New Haven, at which time Mayor Fitzgerald of the Elm City presented Cobb with a Winchester ventilated rib trap gun, the latest thing in gun craft. Bender was presented with one of these guns the day the New Haven ball park formally opened.

CORRUGATED WIRE GLASS.

By incorporating slight corrugations or ripples in wire glass, a leading wire glass manufacturer claims that he has evolved a glass that throws the light all over the building. Again, this glass is stronger and more durable, being made in one solid piece and not in layers with the wire between. It does not require special roof members for installation and can be used in connection with other corrugated materials for sky lights, side walls, and roofs.

SNOW SAVES MAN'S LIFE.

A thick blanket of snow on the ground at Casper, Wyo., Feb., 12, saved the life of F. E. Wagoner, World War veteran, who has been decorated for bravery in France.

An explosion resulted in Wagoner becoming a "human torch," when his clothing was soaked with flaming gasoline. Rushing from the building where the explosion occurred, the former service man rolled in the snow until the flames were extinguished. He suffered severe burns, but probably will recover.

BOYS KEEP POLISH ON LINCOLN'S BOOTS.

Now that Abraham Lincoln's birthday has passed there may be some who will more or less let their memory of the great martyr slip away until another year, but among these are not the small bootblacks of Newark, N. J.

Their memory of the great President is refreshed each day, for at their hands "Old Abe" gets a shine.

In front of the Court House stands St. Gauden's statue of Lincoln, beloved play place for children. The small boys with their shoe shining boxes thrown over their shoulders have taken it upon themselves to keep the bronze shoes of Lincoln shining like no other shoes in Newark.

It's a service of love and all the boys get is Lincoln's kindly smile reaching down to them as they work.

LAUGHS

"What do they mean by the word 'civilized'?" asked the simple barbarian. "To be civilized," answered the chief, "is to own up once for all that you're whipped."

"What is a 'Crystal Maze'?" asked Willie. Bobby (lately returned from the city)—Why, it's a place full of mirrors that you go into and meet yourself coming out.

He—So your husband has given up smoking? It requires a pretty strong will to accomplish that! She—Well, I'd have you understand that I have a strong will.

"So the doctor's making money, is he?" "Well, I should say so. Why, he's reached that point of prosperity where fashionable women send for him to treat them for imaginary ills."

Mr. Highmus—I can't say I think much of the new kitchen girl's cooking. Mrs. Highmus—I know she isn't a first class cook, Horace, but it's so restful to reflect that she's perfectly bald.

Father—The idea of your thinking of marrying that young man! He can't scrape enough money together to buy a square meal. Gwendolyn—But that doesn't make any difference, papa, dear; we haven't either of us had an appetite for a month.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Oldcastle, "your son, like most of the young men of the present day, is looking forward with a great deal of eagerness to his patrimony." "Oh," replied her hostess, "there ain't any Irish blood in our family at all. Josiah's folks all came from Massachusetts, and I'm from New Jersey stock."

"I am looking for Miss Passay," said the stranger to the man in the hairdresser's shop. "I understand she occupied the upper floors here." "So she does," replied the man, "and she's in now." "But I got no answer to the bell. Are you sure she's in?" "Positive. This is her hair I'm dressing."

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

HAD \$70,000 IN BANK, BUT LIVED IN POVERTY.

After living in poverty in a shack at Tomates, Marin county, for sixty-one years, David Thrasher eighty-eight, died recently.

Bankbooks found in the shack showed deposits totaling \$70,500 in San Francisco banks. His only known relative is Mrs. Sydney Breese of Springfield, Ill.

WOULD EXEMPT PRESIDENT'S SALARY FROM INCOME TAXES.

The first move to exempt the salary of the President from income taxes was made in the House February 7th, by Representative Pell, Democrat, of New York. A bill by the New York member would exempt not only the \$75,000 salary of the President but also the salary of the Vice-President from the provisions of the income tax law.

Beginning next March 4, the President will have to pay an income tax of about \$18,000 a year unless special exemption legislation is enacted.

VESUVIUS IN FERMENT.

Heavy clouds of smoke are pouring from Mount Vesuvius and there are signs of an imminent eruption, causing much uneasiness in Naples. Professor Perret, of Naples, who probably knows the volcano as well as any person, and other leading Italian volcanologists do not believe there is danger of an eruption.

"There is no probability of a big eruption now, owing to the condition of the crater basin, which was deepened by the eruption of 1906, when the cone of the mountain was blown off," said Professor Perret. "This basin must fill up and fifteen years will be required for the formation of a new cone. An overflow of lava, rumbling and the heavy belching of smoke are likely, but there is no probability of a real disturbance. I regret the reports which have been issued regarding the volcano. They are preventing thousands of persons from making the ascent through fear of an eruption."

GIRLS AGAINST CIGARETTES.

The younger generation of the University of Illinois town plans to make it pure and undefiled if the crusade started several days ago is carried out.

It all started when twenty-five girls, members of the Christian Endeavor Society of the West Side Christian Church, solemnly pledged themselves not to have dates with young men who smoke cigarettes, and also pledged their influence in stopping the habit. Several hundred of the fair sex have enlisted already and the goal is 1,000 members.

However, the young men are going them one better. They have also formed a crusade. They have formed an organization and intend to make the girls over "into the kind of girls our mothers were."

Hereafter all members of the boys' organiza-

tion will refuse to keep company with girls wearing skirts at knee lengths. The ban has been placed on the half sock, rolled down variety. They refuse to dance with girls who wear no corsets or wear low-cut dresses beyond the point where mother wore them when she was a girl.

Rouge and paint and other aids to the complexion are taboo; silk socks are also black-listed. Pulled eyebrows and "cootie garages" must be banished with the shimmy and the toddle, the boys declare.

BLAZING COAL MINE UNDER SCRANTON.

A red-hot coal bed, ten feet in thickness and at least 500 feet in length, is blazing 400 feet under Scranton, Pa. The fire is located in the abandoned workings of the old Central mine, West Scranton, and is steadily creeping eastward, consuming in its course thousands of tons of anthracite. All efforts of 200 fire fighters to extinguish the blaze have been of no avail.

Seven streams of water have for weeks been pouring upon the burning coal with no apparent result, the water causing fantastic vapors in the white heat, which serve only to hamper the work of the fire fighters, already hampered enough by the heat and poisonous gases issuing from the burning coal.

The firemen enter the mine through a shaft two miles away. They are unable on account of the terrible heat to venture any nearer the fire than 500 feet. A perpendicular airshaft, located directly above the fire and communicating with the open air 400 feet above affords a draught greater than that of the most towering smoke-stack. Grave danger confronts the men fighting the flames, as a sudden depression in the atmospheric conditions above might send the sulphurous gases backward, resulting in suffocation.

From a distance, with the aid of glasses, can be seen an inferno in which old Pluto himself might luxuriate. There are in a wilderness of fire with low hanging ceilings wide crevices from which issue blue and white flames. The heat is unbearable.

All faith in the efficacy of water in extinguishing the flames has been abandoned, and the erection of walls to exclude air and cause the fire to die of inert gas is the plan of the fire fighters, following an investigation by a commission from the State Department of Mining. Concrete walls four feet thick are being built in all tunnels and crevices leading to the fire.

In sections of adjacent veins remote from the scene of the fire temperatures of 170 degrees Fahrenheit have been recorded.

The abandoned mines of the People's Coal Company, communicating with the central mine, where the fire is located, contain large quantities of gas. If the fire should come in contact with this gas an explosion would result the effects of which are incalculable, according to experts. There is no immediate danger of this, the experts all concur, and it is predicted that within a few weeks, through the present method of fighting the flames, the fire will be extinguished.

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

U. S. SAYS HENNESSEY IS DEAD;

Edward Reginald Hennessy, Watertown, N. Y., is dead and he is a hero, and he persists in refusing to believe either statement. To make matters more complicated his mother and the other members of the family join Hennessy in his refusal to stay dead, albeit they are willing to believe he is a hero. In fact, he is known as "Peerless."

It's the pesky War Department down at Washington that killed and decorated the young man. And red tape being red tape, and there being no possibility that a department clerk can ever err, there is a compensation check awaiting Mrs. Hennessy calling for 10,000 real dollars as soon as she can fill the necessary blanks.

But the motherly question is: How can one receipt for a dead hero son's benefit from a kindly government when the son is waiting in the dining room for a second helping?

Hennessy enlisted in May, 1918, in the Sixty-third Engineers. He did his bit and came home. Some time ago his mother got a letter condoling with her upon her supreme sacrifice and advising her that her gift of a son to the cause was worth \$10,000.

Hennessy wrote the Department, politely begging to know when and where he died.

He was told, in reply, that he passed away February 19, 1919, as the result of wounds in battle in which he played a "valiant part."

And still he doesn't believe it.

THE PLAGUE OF RATS.

In the estimation of the Bureau of Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture, the rat is a world menace. The necessity of a campaign of unvarying efficiency against the common brown rat is an outstanding one. No other animal or insect is so dangerous and persistent an enemy, and no other enemy succeeds in inflicting the damage that the rat annually imposes upon humanity. The rat population of the United States is at least equal to the human population, and the same ratio holds true for practically every country under the sun. The bureau of Biological Survey places the value of the food and property destroyed annually by each individual rat at \$2. Keeping well within the boundaries of conservatism, this means that each year, in this country alone, we produce \$200,000,000 worth of food to no other purpose than to feed our rats. In another way, 200,000 men in the United States are devoting all their labor to the maintenance of 100,000,000 rats.

But the rodent's enmity is far from being satisfied by this huge economic injury. A frequenter of all the places that are vile and loathsome, the rat is the most efficient germ carrier. In India, no longer ago than 1896, the bubonic plague killed 9,000,000 persons.

Recommendations for the extermination of the rat made by the bureau are: Trapping should be done continuously and systematically at all rat-

infested places. Rat poisons, especially barium carbonate preparations, as recently developed by Biological Survey, should be employed.

GREATEST DISASTER IN ANNALS OF FORESTRY.

Eight billion board feet of timber was destroyed by the cyclone that ripped a seventy-five mile path, thirty miles wide, through the forests of the Olympic peninsula, Washington State, January 29. Reports from the Forest Service made public to-day class the storm as "the greatest disaster ever recorded in the annals of forestry and lumbering."

The wind registered 132 miles an hour before instruments at the Weather Bureau station were destroyed. It is estimated to have reached 150 miles thereafter. Practically all standing timber over 2,250 square miles went down in a tangled mass, obliterating roads and telegraph lines and with little chance of salvage. Most of it was Western hemlock and spruce, acting Forester E. A. Sherman reported, and subject to rapid decay.

No human lives were lost, but buildings were destroyed and many animals perished, including elk. Numbers of animals were penned in by the tangle of debris to die of hunger. The best winter feeding ground for elk of the region was swept.

"If fire should gain headway in the devastated area," the forester reported, "the most stupendous conflagration ever known in this country would result. Fifteen billion feet (of timber) is exposed in the adjoining part of the Olympic national forest."

As special precaution against fire the Navy Department has been asked to make an air survey of the storm area, since it is impassable afoot. Re-equipment of the war time spruce railroad, the only line of rails into the section, has been asked of the War Department in order to salvage as much timber as possible.

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PHANTOM HERD FOUND

The phantom of the North has been found. For years a tradition of a great herd of buffalo somewhere in the Mackenzie River basin has lingered among the fur posts. Indians told of sighting it blackening the wild pastures of remote valleys. No white men had seen it. But trappers had chanced upon its trampled trails and ten years ago two mighty bulls that had straggled far from their fellows were killed.

F. H. Kitto, engineer of the natural resources branch of the Department of the Interior, who has returned from five months of explorations in the Mackenzie country, reports that he saw the herd and estimates it at 1,000 head. He received reports, he says, from Indians that another herd equally as large exists further north.

Canada has the largest bison herd in the world in the National Park at Wainwright. January 1 it numbered 4,335. With the exception of ninety animals that still live in untamed freedom in the northern fastnesses of Yellowstone Park the Mackenzie River herds are the only wild buffalo left on the continent.

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